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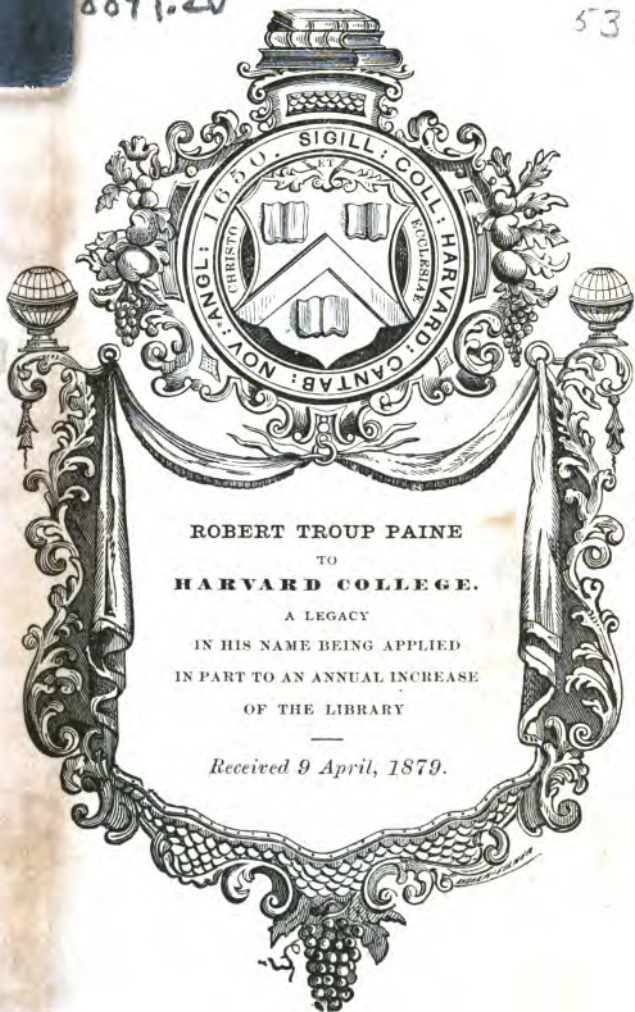
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TO  
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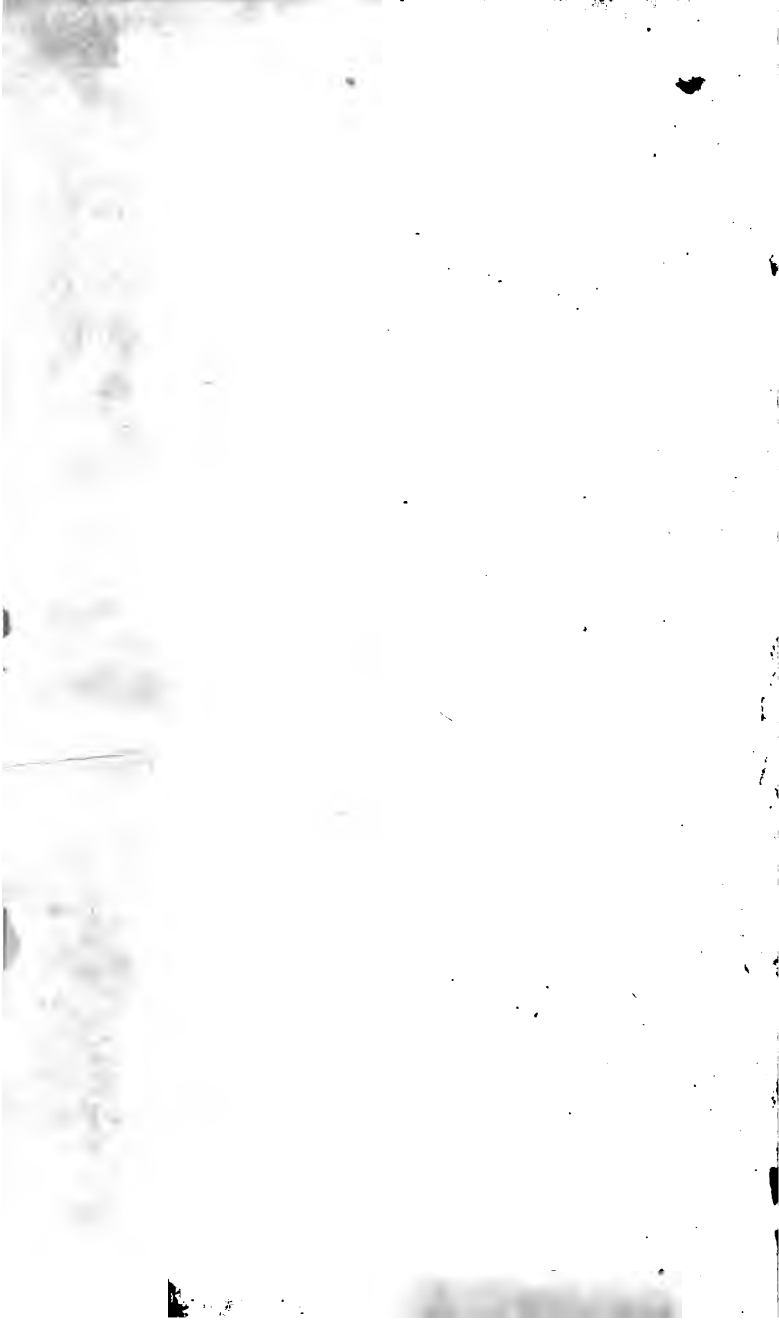
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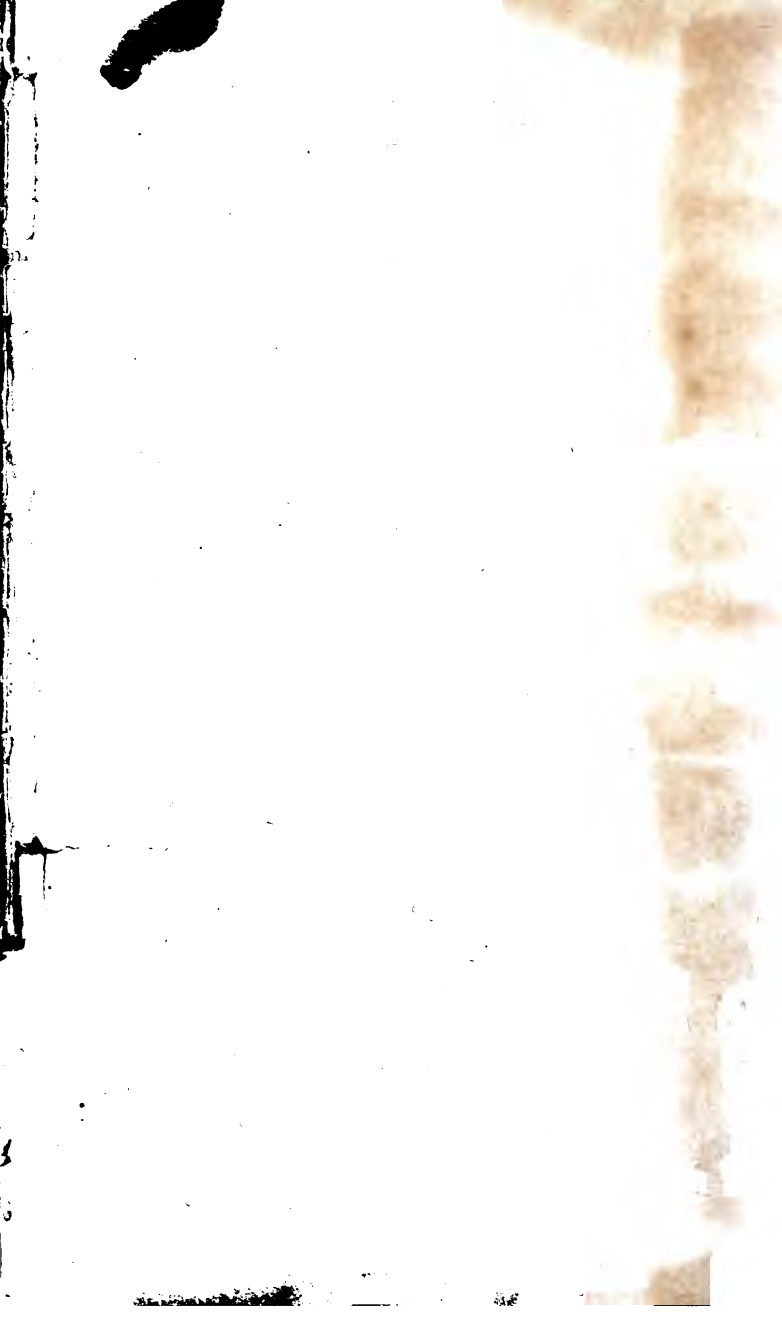
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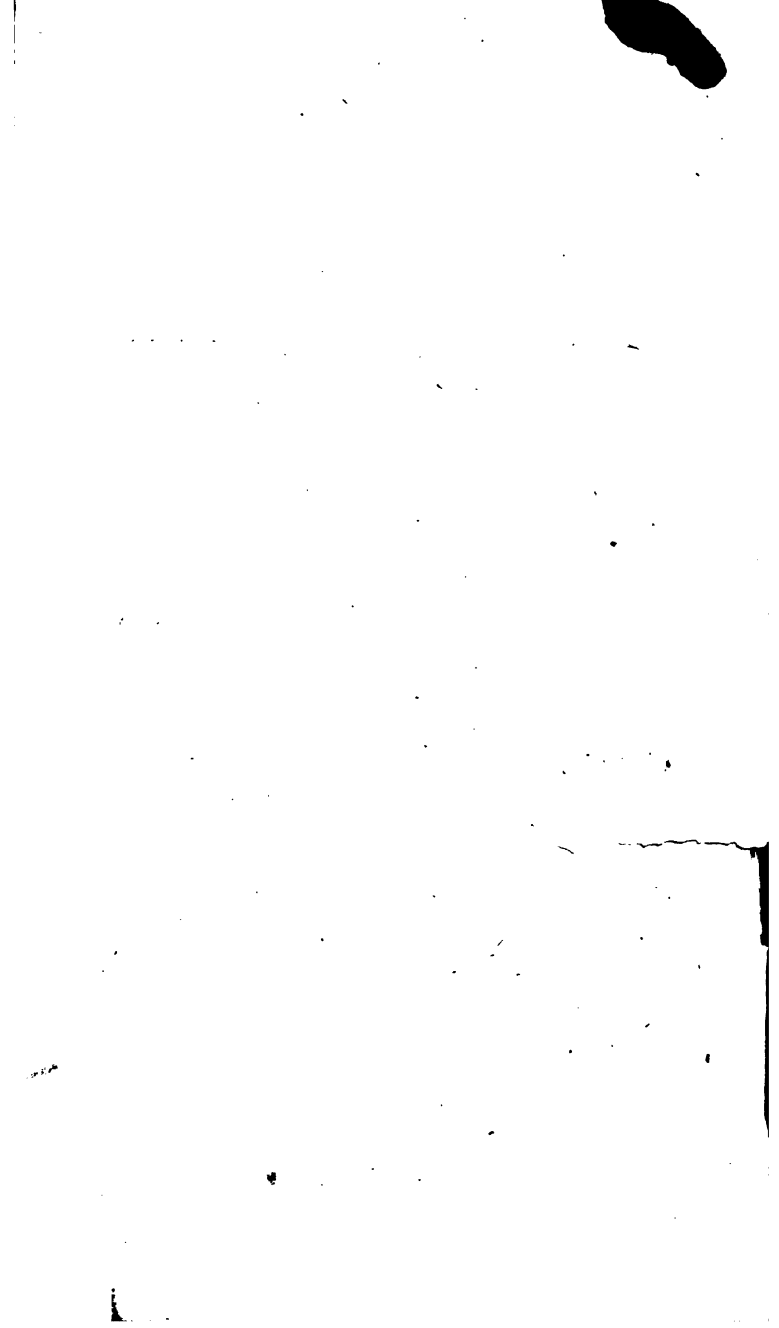
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Robert Troup Paine  
to  
Harvard College.









**LECTURES**  
**ON**  
**MORAL PHILOSOPHY.**

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**BY THE REV. JOHN WITHERSPOON, D. D. L. L. D.**  
*Late President of the College at Princeton, N. J.*

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**CAREFULLY REVISED,**  
**AND**  
**FREED FROM THE ERRORS OF FORMER EDITIONS.**  
**TO WHICH IS ADDED,**  
**BY THE SAME AUTHOR,**  
**AN ADDRESS TO THE STUDENTS**  
**OF THE SENIOR CLASS,**  
**AND**  
**LETTERS ON EDUCATION AND MARRIAGE.**

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PHILADELPHIA:

**PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM W. WOODWARD,**  
**No. 52, SOUTH SECOND STREET.**

**1822.**

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Phil 8897, 20

1879, April 9.

Paine bequest.

**EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO WIT:**

**BE IT REMEMBERED**, That on the eighteenth day of December, in the forty-sixth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1821, William W. Woodward, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

“Lectures on Moral Philosophy. By the Rev. John Witherspoon, D D. L. L. D. Late President of the College at Princeton, N. J. Carefully revised, and freed from the errors of former Editions. To which is added, by the same Author, An Address to the Students of the Senior Class, and Letters on Education and Marriage.”

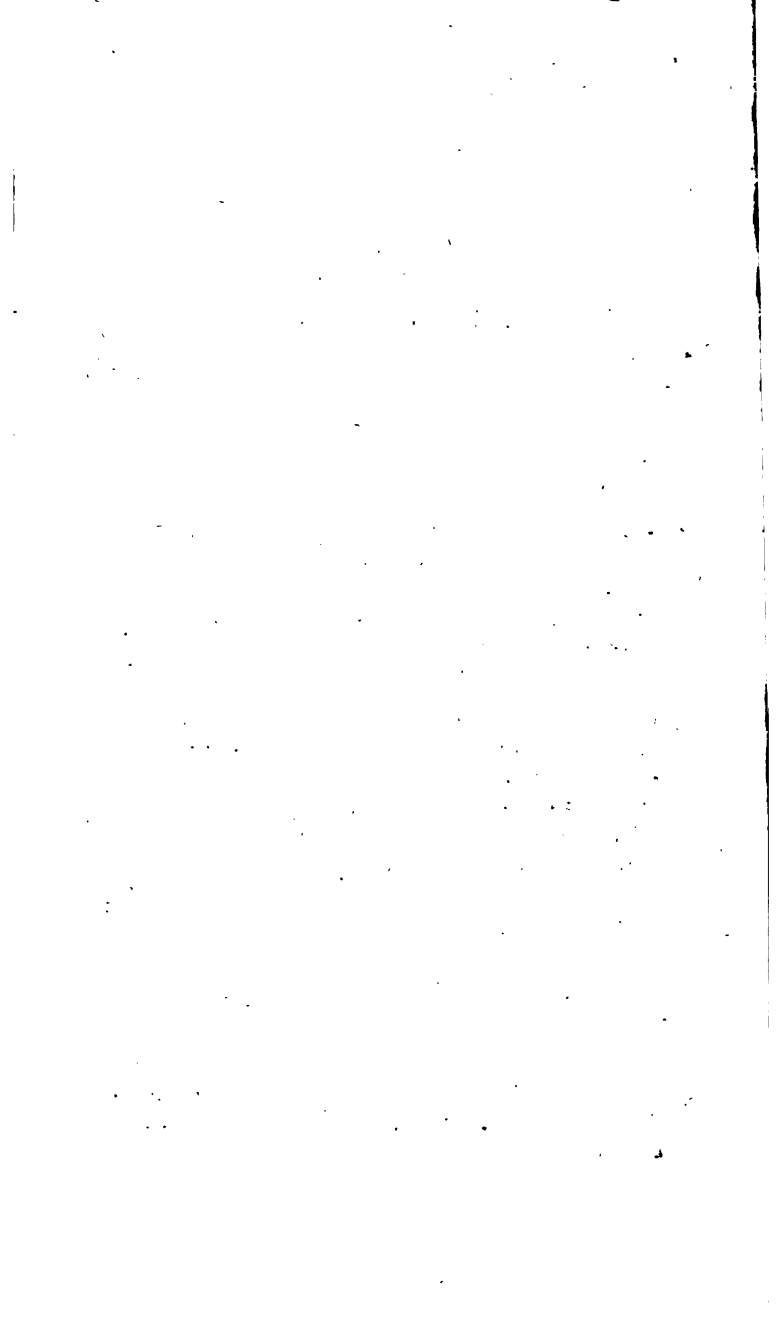
In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “An act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such Copies during the times therein mentioned.”—And also to the Act, entitled “An act supplementary to an act, entitled “An act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such Copies during the times therein mentioned,” and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.

**D. CALDWELL**

*Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.*

25-4

*IN JUSTICE* to the memory of Dr. Wither-  
spoon, it ought to be stated that he did not intend  
these lectures for the press ; and that he once com-  
pelled a printer, who without his knowledge, had un-  
dertaken to publish them, to desist from the design,  
by threatening a prosecution as the consequence of  
persisting in it. The Doctor's lectures on morals,  
notwithstanding they assume the form of regular  
discourses, were in fact, viewed by himself as little  
more than a syllabus or compend, on which he might  
enlarge before a class at the times of recitation ;  
and not intending that they should go further, or  
be otherwise considered, he took freely, and with-  
out acknowledgment from writers of character  
such ideas, and perhaps expressions, as he found  
suited to his purpose. But though these causes  
would not permit the Doctor himself to give to  
the public these sketches of moral philosophy, it  
is believed that they ought not to operate so power-  
fully on those into whose hands his papers have  
fallen since his death. Many of his pupils whose  
eminence in literature and distinction in society  
give weight to their opinions, have thought that  
these lectures, with all their imperfections, con-  
tain one of the best and most perspicuous exhibi-  
tions of the radical principles of the science on  
which they treat that has ever been made ; and  
they have very importunately demanded their  
publication in an edition of his works : Nor is it  
conceived that a compliance with this demand,  
after the explanation here given, can do any in-  
jury to the Doctor's reputation. And to the writer  
of this note it does not seem a sufficient reason  
that a very valuable work should be consigned  
to oblivion, because it is in some measure incom-  
plete, or because it is partly a selection from au-  
thors to whom a distinct reference cannot now be  
made.



LECTURES  
ON  
MORAL PHILOSOPHY.



**MORAL** Philosophy is that branch of Science which treats of the principles and laws of Duty or Morals. It is called *Philosophy*, because it is an inquiry into the nature and grounds of moral obligation by *reason*, as distinct from *revelation*.

Hence arises a question, is it lawful, and is it safe or useful, to separate moral philosophy from religion? It will be said, it is either the *same* or *different* from revealed truth; if the same, *unnecessary*—if different, *false* and *dangerous*.

An author of New-England says, moral philosophy is just reducing infidelity to a system. But however specious the objections, they will be found at bottom not solid.—If the Scripture is true, the discoveries of reason cannot be *contrary* to it; and, therefore, it has nothing to fear from that quarter. And as we are certain it can do no *evil*, so there is a probability that it may do much *good*. There may be an *illustration* and *confirmation* of the inspired writings, from reason and observation, which will greatly add to their beauty and force.

The noble and eminent improvements in natural philosophy, which have been made since the end of the last century, have been far from hurting the interest of religion; on the contrary, they have greatly promoted it. Why should it not be the same with moral philosophy, which is indeed nothing else but the knowledge of human nature? It is true, that infidels do commonly proceed upon pretended principles of reason. But as it is impossible to hinder them from reasoning on this subject, the best way is to meet them upon their own ground, and to show from reason itself, the fallacy of their principles. I do not know any thing that serves more for the support of religion than to see, from the different and opposite systems of philosophers, that there is nothing certain in their schemes, but what is coincident with the word of God.

Some there are, and perhaps more in the present than any former age, who deny the law of nature, and say, that all such sentiments as have been usually ascribed to the law of nature are from revelation and tradition. We must distinguish here between the *light* of nature and the *law* of nature: by the first is to be understood what we can or do discover by our own powers, without revelation or tradition: by the second, that which, when discovered, can be made appear to be agreeable to reason and nature.

There have been some very shrewd and

The faculties of the mind are commonly divided into these three kinds, the *understanding*, the *will*, and the *affections*; though perhaps it is proper to observe, that these are not three qualities wholly distinct, as if they were three different beings; but different ways of exerting the same simple principle. It is the soul or mind that understands, wills, or is affected with pleasure and pain.

The understanding seems to have *truth* for its object, the discovering things as they really are in themselves, and in their relations one to another.

It has been disputed whether *good* be in any degree the object of the understanding. On the one hand it seems as if truth, and that only, belonged to the understanding; because we can easily suppose persons of equal intellectual powers and opposite moral characters. Nay, we can suppose malignity joined to a high degree of understanding, and virtue or true goodness, to a much lower. On the other hand, the choice made by the will seems to have the judgment or deliberation of the understanding as its very foundation. How can this be, it will be said, if the understanding has nothing to do with good or evil? A considerable opposition of sentiments among philosophers has arisen from this question. Dr. Clark, and some others, make *understanding* or *reason* the immediate principle of virtue. Shaftsbury, Hutcheson, and others, make *affection* the principle of it.



Perhaps neither the one nor the other is wholly right. Probably both are necessary.

The connexion between *truth* and *goodness*, between the *understanding* and the *heart*, is a subject of great moment, but also of great difficulty. I think we may say with certainty, that infinite perfection, intellectual and moral, are united and inseparable in the Supreme Being. There is not however in inferior natures an exact proportion between the one and the other; yet I apprehend that truth naturally and necessarily promotes goodness, and falsehood the contrary; but as the influence is reciprocal, malignity of disposition, even with the greatest natural powers, blinds the understanding, and prevents the perception of truth itself.

Of the will it is usual to enumerate four acts; *desire, aversion, joy, and sorrow*. The two last, Hutchinson says are superfluous, in which he seems to be right. All the acts of the will may be reduced to the two great heads of desire and aversion; or in other words, *choosing and refusing*.

The affections are called also *passions*, because often excited by external objects. In as far as they differ from a calm deliberate decision of the judgment, or determination of the will, they may be called *strong propensities*, implanted in our nature, which of themselves contribute not a little to bias the judgment, or incline the will.

The affections cannot be better understood,

than by observing the difference between a calm deliberate general inclination, whether of the selfish or benevolent kind; and particular violent inclinations. Every man deliberately wishes his own happiness; but this differs considerably from a passionate attachment to particular gratifications; as a love of riches, honours, pleasures. A good man will have a deliberate fixed desire of the welfare of mankind; but this differs from the love of children, relations, friends, country.

The passions are very numerous, and may be greatly diversified, because every thing, however modified, that is the object of desire or aversion, may grow by accident or indulgence, to such a size, as to be called, and deserve to be called, a passion. Accordingly we express ourselves thus in the English language—A passion for horses, dogs, play, &c.

However, all the passions may be ranged under the two great heads of *love* and *hatred*. To the first belong *esteem*, *admiration*, *goodwill*, and every species of *approbation*, *delight*, and *desire*; to the other, all kinds of aversion, and ways of expressing it, *envy*, *malice*, *rage*, *revenge*, to whatever objects they may be directed.

*Hope* and *fear*, *joy* and *sorrow*, though frequently ranked among the passions, seem rather to be *states* or *modifications* of the *mind*, attending the exercise of every passion,

according as its object is probable or improbable, possess or lost.

*Jealousy* seems to be a passion of a middle nature, which it is not easy to say whether it should be ranked under the head of love or hatred. It is often said of jealousy between the sexes, that it springs from love; yet, it seems plainly impossible, that it can have place without forming an ill opinion of its object, at least in some degree. The same thing may be said of jealousy and suspicion in friendship.

The passions may be ranged in two classes in a different way, viz. as they are *selfish* or *benevolent*, *public* or *private*. There will be great occasion to consider this distinction afterwards, in explaining the nature of virtue, and the motives that lead to it. What is observed now, is only to illustrate our nature as it really is.

There is a great and real distinction between passions, selfish and benevolent. The first point directly, and immediately, at our own interest in the gratification; the others point immediately at the happiness of others. Of the first kind, is the *love of fame, power, property, pleasure*. And of the second, is *family and domestic affection, friendship and patriotism*. It is to no purpose to say, that, ultimately, it is to please ourselves, or because we feel a satisfaction in seeking the good of others; for it is certain, that the direct object in view in many cases, is to

promote the happiness of others; and for this many have been willing to sacrifice every thing, even life itself.

After this brief survey of human nature, in one light, or in one point of view, which may be called its capacity; it will be necessary to return back, and take a survey of the way, in which we become acquainted with the objects about which we are to be conversant, or upon which the above faculties are to be exercised.

On this it is proper to observe in general, that there are but two ways in which we come to the knowledge of things, *via*. I. *Sensation*, II. *Reflection*.

I. The first of these must be divided again into two parts, *external* and *internal*.

*External* arises from the immediate impression of objects from without. The external senses in number are five; *seeing*, *hearing*, *feeling*, *tasting*, and *smelling*.

In these are observable the impression itself, - or the sensation we feel, and the supposition inseparable from it, that it is produced by an external object. That our senses are to be trusted in the information they give us, seems to me a first principle, because they are the foundation of all our after reasonings. The few exceptions of accidental irregularity in the senses can found no just objection to this, as there are so many plain and obvious ways of discovering and correcting it.

The reality of the material system, I think, may be easily established, except upon such principles as are subversive of all certainty, and lead to universal scepticism; and persons who would maintain such principles do not deserve to be reasoned with, because they do not pretend to communicate knowledge, but to take all knowledge from us.

The Immaterialists say, that we are conscious of nothing but the impression or feeling of our own mind; but they do not observe that the impression itself implies and supposes something external that communicates it, and which cannot be separated from that supposition. Sometimes such reasoners tell us, that we cannot shew the substance separate from its sensible qualities. No more can any man shew me a sensible quality separate from a particular subject. If any man will shew me whiteness, without shewing me any thing that is white, or roundness, without any thing that is round, I will shew him the substance without either colour or shape.

Immaterialism takes away the distinction between truth and falsehood. I have an idea of a house or tree in a certain place, and I call this *true*, that is, I am of opinion, there is *really* a house or tree in that place. Again, I form an idea of a house or tree, as what *may be* in that place; I ask what is the difference, if after all, you tell me, there is neither tree, house nor place any where ex-

isting. An advocate for that system says, that truth consists in the *liveliness* of the idea, than which nothing can be more manifestly false. I can form as distinct an idea of any thing that is not, as any thing that is, when it is absent from my sight. I have a much more lively idea of Jupiter and Juno, and many of their actions, from Homer and Virgil; though I do not believe that any of them ever existed; than I have of many things that I know happened within these few months.

The truth is, the immaterial system is a wild and ridiculous attempt to unsettle the principles of common sense by metaphysical reasoning, which can hardly produce any thing but contempt in the generality of persons who hear it; and which, I verily believe, never produced conviction even on the persons who pretend to espouse it.

## LECTURE III.

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II. INTERNAL sensation is what Mr. Hutchinson calls the *finer powers of perception*. It takes its rise from external objects, but, by abstraction, considers something farther than merely the sensible qualities—

1. Thus with respect to many objects, there is a sense of *beauty in the appearance*, structure or composition, which is altogether distinct from mere colour, shape and extension. How then is this beauty perceived? It enters by the eye, but it is perceived and relished by what may be well enough called an *internal sense*, quality or capacity of the mind.

2. There is a sense of *pleasure in imitation*, whence the arts of painting, sculpture, poetry, are often called the *imitative arts*. It is easy to see that the imitation itself gives the pleasure, for we receive much pleasure from a lively description of what would be painful to behold.

3. A sense of *harmony*.

4. A sense of *order or proportion*.

Perhaps, after all, the whole of these senses may be considered as belonging to one class, and to be the particulars which

either singly, or by the union of several of them, or of the whole, produce what is called *the pleasures of the imagination*. If so, we may extend these senses to every thing that enters into the principles of beauty and gracefulness—*Order, proportion, simplicity, intricacy, uniformity, variety*—especially if these principles have any thing in common that is equally applicable to all the fine arts, *painting, statuary, architecture, music, poetry, oratory*.

The various theories upon the principles of beauty, or what it is that properly constitutes it, are of much importance on the subject of taste and criticism, but of very little in point of morals. Whether it be a *simple perception* that cannot be analysed, or a *Je ne sçai quoi*, as the French call it, that cannot be discovered; it is the same thing to our present purpose, since it cannot be denied, that there is a perception of beauty, and that this is very different from the mere colour or dimensions of the object. This beauty extends to the form and shape of visible, or to the grace and motion of living objects; indeed, to all works of art, and productions of genius.

These are called the *reflex senses* sometimes; and it is of moment to observe both that they really belong to our nature, and that they are very different from the grosser perceptions of external sense.

It must also be observed, that several



distinguished writers have added as an internal sense, that of *morality*, a sense and perception of *moral excellence*, and our obligation to conform ourselves to it in our conduct.

Though there is no occasion to join Mr. Hutchinson or any other, in their opposition to such as make reason the principle of virtuous conduct; yet I think it must be admitted, that a sense of moral good and evil is as really a principle of our nature, as either the gross external or reflex senses, and as truly distinct from both, as they are from each other. (This *moral sense* is precisely the same thing with what, in Scripture and common language, we call *conscience*. It is the law which our Maker has written upon our hearts; and both intimates and enforces duty, previous to all reasoning.)

The opposers of innate ideas, and of the law of nature, are unwilling to admit the reality of a moral sense, yet their objections are wholly frivolous. The necessity of education and information to the production and exercise of the reflex senses, or powers of the imagination, is every whit as great as to the application of the moral sense. If therefore any one should say, as is often done by Mr. Locke, if there are any innate principles what are they? enumerate them to me; if they are essential to man, they must be in every man; let me take any artless clown and examine him, and see if he can tell me

what they are.—I would say, if the principles of taste are natural, they must be universal. Let me try the clown then, and see whether he will agree with us, either in discovering the beauty of a poem or picture, or being able to assign the reasons of his approbation.

There are two senses which are not easily reducible to any of the two kinds of internal senses, and yet certainly belong to our nature. They are allied to one another—A sense of *ridicule*, and a sense of *honour and shame*. A sense of the ridiculous is something peculiar; for though it be admitted that every thing that is ridiculous is at the same time unreasonable and absurd; yet it is as certain the terms are not convertible, for any thing that is absurd is not ridiculous. There are an hundred falsehoods in mathematics and other sciences, that do not tempt any body to laugh.

Shaftsbury has, through his whole writings, endeavoured to establish this principle, that ridicule is the test of truth; but the falsehood of that opinion appears from the above remark, for there is something really distinct from reasoning in ridicule. It seems to be putting imagination in the place of reason.—See Brown's *Essays on the Characteristics*.

A sense of honour and shame seems, in a certain view, to subject us to the opinions of others, as they depend upon the sentiments

of our fellow-creatures. Yet, perhaps we may consider this sentiment as intended to be an assistant or guard to virtue, by making us apprehend reproach from others for what is in itself worthy of blame. This sense is very strong and powerful in its effects, whether it be guided by true or false principles.

After this survey of human nature, let us consider how we derive either the nature or obligation of duty from it.

I. One way is to consider what indications we have from our nature, of *the way that leads to the truest happiness*. This must be done by a careful attention to the several classes of perceptions and affections, to see which of them are most excellent, delightful, or desirable.

They will then soon appear to be of three great classes, as mentioned above, easily distinguishable from one another, and gradually rising above one another.

1. *The gratification of the external senses*. This affords some pleasure. We are led to desire what is pleasing, and to avoid what is disgusting to them.

2. *The finer powers of perception* give a delight which is evidently more excellent, and which we must necessarily pronounce more noble. Poetry, painting, music, &c. the exertion of genius, and exercise of the mental powers in general, give a pleasure,

able writers of late, viz. Dr. Willson, of New Castle, and Mr. Riccalton, of Scotland, who have written against the light of nature, shewing that the first principles of knowledge are taken from information. That nothing can be supposed more rude and ignorant, than man without instruction. That when men have been brought up so, they have scarcely been superior to brutes. It is very difficult to be precise upon this subject, and to distinguish the discoveries of reason from the exercise of it. Yet I think, admitting all, or the greatest part, of what such contend for, we may, notwithstanding, consider how far any thing is consonant to reason, or may be proven by reason; though perhaps reason, if left to itself, would never have discovered it.

Dr. Clark was one of the greatest champions for the law of nature; but it is only since his time that the shrewd opposers of it have appeared. The Hutchinsonians (so called from Hutchinson of England) insist that not only all moral, but also all natural knowledge comes from revelation, the true system of the world, true chronology, all human arts, &c. In this, as is usual with most other classes of men, they carry their favourite notion to extravagance. I am of opinion, that the whole Scripture is perfectly agreeable to sound philosophy; yet certainly it was never intended to teach us every thing. The political law of the Jews contains many

noble principles of equity, and excellent examples to future lawgivers; yet it was so local and peculiar, that certainly it was never intended to be immutable and universal. It would be more just and useful to say that all simple and original discoveries have been the production of Providence, and not the invention of man.

On the whole, it seems reasonable to make moral philosophy, in the sense above explained, a subject of study. And indeed let men think what they will of it, they ought to acquaint themselves with it. They must know what it is, if they mean even to show that it is false.

#### THE DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT.

Moral philosophy is divided into two great branches, *Ethics* and *Politics*, to this some add *Jurisprudence*, though this may be considered as a part of politics.

Ethics relate to personal duties, Politics to the constitution, government, and rights of societies, and Jurisprudence to the administration of justice in constituted states.

It seems a point agreed upon, that the principles of duty and obligation must be drawn from the *nature of man*. That is to say, if we can discover how his Maker formed him, or for what he intended him, that certainly is what he ought to be.

The knowledge of human nature, however, is either perplexed and difficult of it-

self, or hath been made so, by the manner in which writers in all ages have treated it. Perhaps this circumstance itself, is a strong presumption of the truth of the Scripture doctrine of the depravity and corruption of our nature. Supposing this depravity, it must be one great cause of difficulty and confusion in giving an account of human nature as the work of God. This I take to be indeed the case with the greatest part of our moral and theological knowledge.

Those who deny this depravity, will be apt to plead for every thing, or for many things as dictates of nature, which are in reality propensities of nature in its present state, but at the same time the fruit and evidence of its departure from its original purity. It is by the remaining power of natural conscience that we must endeavour to detect and oppose these errors.

I. We may consider man very generally in his species as distinct from, and superior to the other creatures; and what it is in which the difference truly consists. II. As an individual, what are the parts which constitute his nature.

I. Philosophers have generally attempted to assign the precise distinction between men and the other animals; but when endeavouring to bring it to one peculiar incommunicable characteristic, they have generally contradicted one another, and sometimes dis-

puted with violence, and rendered the thing more uncertain.

The difficulty of fixing upon a precise criterion, only serves to show that in man we have an example of what we see also every where else, viz. a beautiful and insensible gradation from one thing to another, so that the highest of the inferior is, as it were, connected and blended with the lowest of the superior class. Birds and beasts are connected by some species, so that you will find it hard to say whether they belong to the one or the other—So indeed it is in the whole vegetable as well as animal kingdom.

(1.) Some say *men* are distinguished from brutes by reason; and certainly this, either in kind or degree, is the most honourable of our distinctions. (2.) Others say that many brutes give strong signs of reason, as dogs, horses and elephants. But that man is distinguished by memory and foresight: but I apprehend that these are upon the same footing with reason; if there are some glimmerings of reason in the brute creation, there are also manifest proofs of memory, and some of foresight. (3.) Some have thought it proper to distinguish man from the inferior creatures by the use of speech, no other creatures having an articulate language. Here again we are obliged to acknowledge that our distinction is chiefly the excellence and fulness of articulate discourse; for brutes have certainly the art of making one another understand

many things by sound. (4.) Some have said that man is not completely distinguished by any of these, but by a sense of religion. And I think it must be admitted that of piety or a sense of a Supreme Being, there is not any trace to be seen in the inferior creatures. The stories handed about by weak-minded persons, or retailed by credulous authors, of respect in them to churches, or sacred persons, are to be disdained as wholly fabulous and visionary. (5.) There have been some who have said that man is distinguished from the brutes by a sense of *ridicule*. The whole creation (says a certain author) is grave except man, no one laughs but himself. There is something whimsical in fixing upon this as the criterion, and it does not seem to set us in a very respectable light. Perhaps it is not improper to smile upon the occasion, and to say, that if this sentiment is embraced, we shall be obliged to confess kindred with the apes, who are certainly themselves possessed of a risible faculty, as well as qualified to excite laughter in us.

On the whole there seems no necessity of fixing upon some one criterion to the exclusion of others. There is a great and apparent distinction between man and the inferior animals, not only in the beauty of his form, which the poet takes notice of, *Os homini sublime dedit*, &c. but also in reason, me-



mory, reflection, and the knowledge of God and a future state.

A general distinction, which deserves particularly to be taken notice of in moral disquisitions, is, that man is evidently made to be guided, and protected from dangers, and supplied with what is useful more by reason, and brutes more by instinct.

It is not very easy, and perhaps not necessary to explain instinct. It is something previous to reason and choice. When we say the birds build their nests by instinct, and that man builds his habitation by reflection, experience or instruction, we understand the thing well enough, but if we attempt to give a logical definition of either the one or the other, it will immediately be assaulted by a thousand arguments.

Though man is evidently governed by something else than instinct, he also has several instinctive propensities, some of them independent of, and some of them intermixed with his moral dispositions. Of the first kind are hunger, thirst, and some others; of the last is the *storge*, or parental tenderness towards offspring.

On instinct we shall only say farther, that it leads more immediately to the appointment of the Creator, and whether in man, or in other creatures, operates more early and more uniformly than reason.

## LECTURE II.



II. CONSIDERING man as an individual, we discover the most obvious and remarkable circumstances of his nature ; that he is a compound of body and spirit. I take this for granted here, because we are only explaining the nature of man. When we come to his sentiments and principles of action, it will be more proper to take notice of the spirituality and immortality of the soul, and how they are proved.

The body and spirit have a great reciprocal influence one upon another. The body on the temper and disposition of the soul, and the soul on the state and habit of the body. The body is properly the minister of the soul, the means of conveying perceptions to it, but nothing without it.

It is needless to enlarge upon the structure of the body ; this is sufficiently known to all, except we descend to anatomical exactness, and then, like all the other parts of nature, it shows the infinite wisdom of the Creator.

With regard to morals, the influence of the body in a certain view may be very great in enslaving men to appetite, and yet there

does not seem any such connexion with morals as to require a particular description.

I think there is little reason to doubt that there are great and essential differences between man and man, as to the spirit and its proper powers ; but it seems plain that such are the laws of union between the body and spirit, that many faculties are weakened, and some rendered altogether incapable of exercise, merely by an alteration of the state of the body. Memory is frequently lost, and judgment weakened, by old age and disease. Sometimes, by a contusion of the brain in a fall, the judgment is wholly disordered.

The instinctive appetites of hunger and thirst, seem to reside directly in the body ; and the soul to have little more than a passive perception. Some passions, particularly fear and rage, seem also to have their seat in the body, immediately producing a certain modification of the blood and spirits.—This indeed is perhaps the case in some degree with all passions whenever they are indulged ; they give a modification to the blood and spirits, which make them easily rekindled ; but there are none which do so instantaneously arise from the body, and prevent deliberation, will and choice, as these now named.

To consider the evil passions to which we are liable, we may say those that depend most upon the body, are *fear, anger, voluptuousness* ; and those that depend least upon it, are *ambition, envy, covetousness*.

though not so tumultuous, much more refined, and which does not so soon satiate.

3. Superior to both these, is a *sense of moral excellence*, and a pleasure arising from doing what is dictated by the moral sense.

It must doubtless be admitted that this representation is agreeable to truth, and that to those who would calmly and fairly weigh the delight of moral action, it must appear superior to any other gratification, being most *noble pure and durable*. Therefore we might conclude, that it is to be preferred before all other sources of pleasure—that they are to give way to it when opposite, and to be no otherwise embraced than in subserviency to it.

II. But though we cannot say there is any thing false in this theory, there are certainly very essential defects.—As for example, it wholly confounds or leaves entirely undistinguished, acting virtuously from seeking happiness: so that promoting our own happiness will in that case be the essence or definition of virtue, and a view to our own interest will be the sole and complete obligation to virtue. Now there is good ground to believe not only that reason teaches us, but that the moral sense dictates to us, something more on both heads, viz. that *there are disinterested affections* that point directly at the good of others, and that these are so far from meriting to be excluded from the notion of virtue altogether, that they rather

seem to claim a preference to the selfish affections. I know the friends of the scheme of self-interest have a way of colouring or solving this. They say, men only approve and delight in benevolent affections, as pleasing and delightful to themselves. But this is not satisfying, for it seems to weaken the force of public affection very much, to refer it all to self-interest, and when nature seems to be carrying you out of yourself, by strong instinctive propensities or implanted affections, to turn the current and direction of these into the stream of self-interest; in which experience tells us we are most apt to run to a vicious excess.

Besides it is affirmed, and I think with good reason, that the moral sense carries a good deal more in it than merely an approbation of a certain class of actions as beautiful, praise worthy or delightful, and therefore finding our interest in them as the most noble gratification. *The moral sense implies also a sense of obligation*, that such and such things are right and others wrong; that we are bound in duty to do the one, and that our conduct is hateful, blameable, and deserving of punishment, if we do the contrary; and there is also in the moral sense or conscience, *an apprehension or belief that reward and punishment will follow*, according as we shall act in the one way, or in the other.

It is so far from being true, that there is no more in virtuous action than a superior de-

gree of beauty, or a more noble pleasure, that indeed *the beauty and sweetness of virtuous action arises from this very circumstance—that it is a compliance with duty or supposed obligation.* Take away this, and the beauty vanishes, as well as the pleasure. Why is it more pleasant to do a just or charitable action, than to satisfy my palate with delightful meat, or to walk in a beautiful garden, or read an exquisite poem? Only because I feel myself under an *obligation* to do it, as a thing useful and important in itself. It is not *duty* because *pleasing*, but *pleasing* because *duty*.—The same thing may be said of *beauty* and *approbation*. I do not approve of the conduct of a plain, honest, industrious, pious man, because it is more beautiful than that of an idle profligate; but I say it is more beautiful and amiable, because he keeps within the bounds of duty. I see a higher species of beauty in moral action; but it arises from a sense of obligation. It may be said, that my interest and duty are the same, because they are inseparable, and the one arises from the other; but there is a real distinction and priority of order. A thing is not my duty, because it is my interest, but it is a wise appointment of nature, that I shall forfeit my interest, if I neglect my duty.

Several other remarks might be made to confirm this. When any person has by experience found that in seeking pleasure he

embraced a less pleasing enjoyment, in place of one more delightful, he may be sensible of *mistake* or *misfortune*, but he has nothing at all of the feeling of *blame* or *self-condemnation*; but when he hath done an immoral action, he has an inward *remorse*, and feels that he has broken a law, and that he ought to have done otherwise.

## LECTURE IV.



THIS therefore lays under the necessity of searching a little further for the principle of moral action. In order to do this with the greater accuracy, and give you a view of the chief controversies on this subject, observe, that there are really *three questions* upon it, which must be inquired into, and distinguished. I am sensible, they are so intimately connected, that they are sometimes necessarily intermixed; but at others, not distinguishing, leads into error. The questions relate to

- I. The nature of virtue.
- II. The foundation of virtue.
- III. The obligation of virtue.

When we enquire into the *nature of virtue*, we do enough, when we point out *what it is*, or show how we may come to the knowledge of every particular duty, and be able to distinguish it from the opposite vice. When we speak of the *foundation* of virtue, we ask or answer the question, *Why is it so?* Why is this course of action preferable to the contrary? What is its excellence? When we speak of the *obligation* of virtue, we ask *by what law we are bound*; or from what



principles we ought to be obedient to the precepts which it contains or prescribes?

After speaking something to each of these—to the controversies that have been raised upon them—and the propriety or importance of entering far into these controversies, or a particular decision of them, I shall proceed to a detail of the moral laws, or the several branches of duty, according to the division first laid down.

I. As to the nature of virtue, or what it is; or, in other words, what is the rule by which I must try every disputed practice—that I might keep clear of the next question, you may observe, that upon all the systems they must have recourse to one or more of the following, viz. *Conscience, reason, experience.*

All who found virtue upon *affection*, particularly Hutchinson, Shaftsbury and their followers, make *the moral sense* the rule of duty, and very often attempt to exclude the use of reason on this subject. These authors seem also to make *benevolence and public affection* the standard of virtue, in distinction from all private and selfish passions.

Doctor Clark, and most English writers of the last age, make *reason* the standard of virtue, particularly as opposed to inward sentiment or affection. They have this to say particularly in support of their opinion, that reason does in fact often controul and alter sentiment; whereas sentiment cannot alter

the clear decisions of reason. Suppose my heart dictates to me any thing to be my duty, as for example, to have compassion on a person detected in the commission of crimes; yet if, upon cool reflection, I perceive that suffering him to go unpunished will be hurtful to the community, I counteract the sentiment from the deductions of reason.

Again: Some take in the aid of *experience*, and chiefly act upon it. All particularly who are upon the selfish scheme, find it necessary to make experience the guide, to show them what things are really conducive to happiness, and what not.

We shall proceed to consider the opinions upon the nature of virtue, the chief of which are as follow:

1. Some say that virtue consists in acting agreeably to *the nature and reason of things*. And that we are to abstract from it all affection, public and private, in determining any question relating to it. Clark.

2. Some say that *benevolence* or *public affection* is virtue, and that a regard to the good of the whole is the standard of virtue. What is most remarkable in this scheme is, that it makes the sense of obligation in particular instances give way to a supposed greater good. Hutchinson.

3. One author (Wollaston *Rel. of Nat. Delineated*) makes *truth* the foundation of virtue, and he reduces the good or evil of any action to the truth or falsehood of a

proposition. This opinion differs not in substance, but in words only, from Dr. Clark's.

4. Others place virtue in *self-love*, and make a well regulated self-love the standard and foundation of it. This scheme is best defended by Dr. Campbell, of St. Andrews.

5. Some of late have made *sympathy* the standard of virtue, particularly Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments. He says we have a certain feeling, by which we *sympathize*, and as he calls it, *go along* with what appears to be right. This is but a new phraseology for the moral sense.

6. David Hume has a scheme of morals that is peculiar to himself. He makes every thing that is *agreeable* and *useful* virtuous, and vice versa; by which he entirely annihilates the difference between natural and moral qualities, making *health*, *strength*, *cleanliness*, as really virtues, as *integrity* and *truth*.

7. We have an opinion published in this country, that virtue consists in *the love of being as such*.

Several of these authors do easily and naturally incorporate piety with their system, particularly Clark, Hutchinson, Campbell and Edwards.

And there are some who begin by establishing natural religion, and then found virtue upon *piety*. This amounts to the same thing in substance; for reasoners upon the nature

of virtue only mean to show what the Author of nature has pointed out as duty. And after natural religion is established on general proofs, it will remain to point out what are its laws, which, not taking in revelation, must bring us back to consider our own nature, and the rational deductions from it.

II. The opinions on the foundation of virtue may be summed up in the four following:

1. The will of God. 2. The reason and nature of things. 3. The public interest. 4. Private interest.

1. *The will of God.* By this is not meant what was mentioned above, that the intimations of the divine will point out what is our duty; but that the *reason of the difference* between virtue and vice is to be sought nowhere else than in *the good pleasure of God.* That there is no *intrinsic* excellence in any thing but as he commands or forbids it. They pretend that if it were otherwise, there would be something above the Supreme Being; something in the nature of things that would lay him under the law of necessity or fate. But notwithstanding the difficulty of our forming clear conceptions on this subject, it seems very harsh and unreasonable to say that the difference between virtue and vice is no other than the divine will. This would be taking away the moral character even of God himself. It would not have any meaning then to say, he is infinitely holy and

infinitely perfect. But probably those who have asserted this, did not mean any more than that the divine will is so perfect and excellent, that all virtue is reduced to conformity to it—and that we ought not to judge of good and evil by any other rule. This is as true as that the Divine conduct is the standard of wisdom.

2. Some found it *in the reason and nature of things*. This may be said to be true, but not sufficiently precise and explicit. Those who embrace this principle succeed best in their reasoning, when endeavouring to show that there is an *essential difference* between virtue and vice. But when they attempt to show wherein this difference doth or can consist, other than public or private happiness, they speak with very little meaning.

3. *Public happiness*. This opinion is, that the foundation of virtue, or that which makes the distinction between it and vice, is its *tendency to promote the general good*; so that *utility* at bottom is the principle of virtue, even with the great patrons of disinterested affection.

4. *Private happiness*. Those who choose to place the foundation of virtue here, would have us to consider no other excellence in it than what immediately conduces to our own gratification.

Upon these opinions I would observe, that there is *something true* in every one of them,

but that they may be easily pushed to an error by *excess*.

*The nature and will of God* is so perfect as to be the true standard of all excellence, natural and moral: and if we are sure of what he is or commands, it would be presumption and folly to reason against it, or put our views of fitness in the room of his pleasure; but to say that God, by his will, might have made the same temper and conduct virtuous and excellent, which we now call vicious, seems to unhinge all our notions of the Supreme excellence even of God himself.

Again, there seems to be in *the nature of things* an intrinsic excellence in moral worth, and an indelible impression of it upon the conscience, distinct from producing or receiving happiness, and yet we cannot easily illustrate its excellence, but by comparing one kind of happiness with another.

Again, promoting *the public or general good* seems to be so nearly connected with virtue, that we must necessarily suppose that universal virtue could be of universal utility. Yet there are two excesses to which this has sometimes led.—One the *fatalist and necessitarian schemes*, to which there are so many objections; and the other the making the general good *the ultimate practical rule* to every particular person; so that he may violate particular obligations with a view to a more general benefit.

Once more, it is certain that virtue is as really connected with *private* as with *public happiness*, and yet to make the interest of the agent the only foundation of it, seems so to narrow the mind, and to be so destructive to the public and generous affections, as to produce the most hurtful effects.

If I were to lay down a few propositions on the foundation of virtue, as a philosopher, they should be the following :

1. From *reason, contemplation, sentiment and tradition*, the Being and infinite perfection and excellence of God may be deduced ; and therefore *what he is, and commands*, is virtue and duty. Whatever he has implanted in *uncorrupted* nature as a principle, is to be received as his will. Propensities resisted and contradicted by the inward principle of *conscience* are to be considered as *inherent or contracted vice*.

2. True virtue certainly promotes *the general good*, and this may be made use of as an argument in *doubtful cases*, to determine whether a particular principle is right or wrong, but to make the good of the whole our immediate principle of action, is putting ourselves in *God's place*, and actually superseding the necessity and use of the particular principles of duty which he hath impressed upon the conscience. As to the whole, I believe the universe is faultless and perfect, but I am unwilling to say it is the *best possible system*, because I am not able to under-

*stand* such an argument; and because it seems to me absurd that infinite perfection should *exhaust* or *limit* itself by a created production.

3. There is in *the nature of things* a difference between virtue and vice; and however much virtue and happiness are connected by the divine law, and in the event of things, we are made so as to *feel* towards them, and *conceive* of them, as distinct. We have the simple perceptions of *duty* and *interest*.

4. *Private and public interest* may be promoted by the same *means*, but they are distinct *views*; they should be made to *assist*, and not *destroy* each other.

The *result of the whole* is, that we ought to take the rule of duty from *conscience*, enlightened by *reason, experience, and every way* by which we can be supposed to learn the will of our Maker, and his intention in creating us such as we are. And we ought to believe that it is as deeply founded as *the nature of God himself*, being a transcript of his moral excellence, and that it is productive of *the greatest good*.



## LECTURE V.



III. IT remains only that we speak of *the obligation* of virtue, or what is the *law* that binds us to the performance, and from what *motives* or *principles* we ought to follow its dictates.

The sentiments upon this subject differ, as men have different views of the nature and foundation of virtue, yet they may be reduced within narrower bounds.

The obligation of virtue may be easily reduced to two general kinds, *duty* and *interest*. The first, if real, implies that we are under some *law*, or subject to some superior, to whom we are accountable. The other only implies that nature points it out to us as our own *greatest happiness*, and that there is no other reason why we ought to obey.

Now I think it is very plain, that there is more in the obligation of virtue, than merely our greatest happiness. The moral sentiment itself implies that it is *duty*, independent of happiness. This produces remorse and disapprobation, as having done what is blamable and of ill desert. We have two ideas very distinct, when we see a man mistaking his own interest, and not obtaining so much hap-

piness as he might; and when we see him breaking through every moral obligation. In the first case we consider him as only accountable to *himself*, in the second, we consider him as accountable to some *superior*, and to *the public*. This sense of duty is the primary notion of law and of rights, taken in their most extensive signification, as including every thing we think we are entitled to expect from others, and the neglect or violation of which we consider as wrong, unjust, vicious, and therefore blameable. It is also affirmed with great apparent reason by many, particularly Butler in his *Analogy* and his sermons, that we have *a natural feeling* of ill desert; and merited punishment in vice. The patrons of the selfish ideas, alone, are those who confine the obligation of virtue to happiness.

But of those who are, or would be thought of the opposite sentiment, there are some who differ very considerably from others. Some who profess great opposition to the selfish scheme, declare also great aversion to founding the obligation of virtue in any degree on the will of a superior, or looking for any sanction of punishment, to corroborate the moral laws. This they especially treat with contempt, when it is supposed to be from the Deity. Shaftsbury speaks with great bitterness against taking into view *a future state* of what he calls more extended self-interest. He says men should love virtue

for its *own sake*, without regard to reward or punishment. In this he has been followed by many reasoners, as far as their regard to religion would permit them.

If, however, we attend to the dictates of conscience, we shall find evidently, a sense of duty, of self-approbation and remorse, which plainly show us to be under a law, and that law to have a sanction: what else is the meaning of the fear and terror, and apprehension of guilty persons? *Quorum mentes si recludantur, &c.* says Cicero.

Nor is this all, but we have all certainly a natural sense of *dependence*. The belief of a Divine Being is certainly either innate and necessary, or has been handed down from the first man, and can now be well supported by the clearest reason. And our relation to him not only lays the foundation of many moral sentiments and duties, but completes the idea of morality and law, by subjecting us to him, and teaching us to conceive of him, not only as our Maker, preserver and benefactor, but as our righteous governor and Supreme Judge. As the being and perfections of God are irrefragably established, the obligation of duty must ultimately rest here.

It ought not to be forgotten, that the belief or apprehension of a future state of rewards and punishments has been as universal as the belief of a Deity, and seems inseparable from it, and therefore must be consi-

dered as the sanction of the moral law. Shaftsbury inveighs severely against this, as making man virtuous from a *mercenary view*; but there are two ways in which we may consider this matter, and in either light his objections have little force. (1.) We may consider the *primary obligations* of virtue as founded upon a sense of its own excellence, joined with a sense of duty and dependence on the Supreme Being, and rewards and punishments as a *secondary motive*, which is found in fact, to be absolutely necessary to restrain or reclaim men from vice and impiety. Or (2.) We may consider that by the light of nature, as well as by revelation, the future reward of virtue is considered as a *state of perfect virtue*, and the happiness is represented as rising from this circumstance. Here there is nothing at all of a mercenary principle, but only an expectation that true goodness, which is here in a state of imperfection, and liable to much opposition; shall then be improved to the highest degree, and put beyond any possibility of change.

We may add to these obligations the *manifest tendency* of a virtuous conduct to promote even our present happiness: this, in *ordinary cases*, it does, and when joined with the steady hope of futurity, does in *all cases* produce a happiness superior to what can be enjoyed in the practice of vice. Yet, per-

haps, the stoics of old, who denied pain to be any evil, and made the wise man superior to all the vicissitudes of fortune; carried things to a romantic and extravagant height. And so do some persons in modern times, who, setting aside the consideration of a future state, teach that virtue is its own reward. There are many situations in which, if you deprive a good man of the hope of future happiness, his state seems very undesirable. On the contrary, sometimes the worst of men enjoy prosperity and success to a great degree, nor do they seem to have any such remorse, as to be an adequate punishment of their crimes. If any should insist, that a good man has always some comfort from within, and a bad man a self-disapprobation and inward disquiet, suited to their characters; I would say, that this arises from the expectation of a future state; and a hope on the one side, and fear on the other, of their condition there.

Those who declaim so highly of virtue being its own reward in this life, take away one of the most considerable arguments, which, from the dawn of philosophy, has always been made use of as a proof of a future state, viz. the unequal distribution of good and evil in this life. Besides they do not seem to view the state of bad men properly. When they talk of remorse of conscience as a sufficient punishment, they forget that this

is seldom to a *high degree*, but in the case of some gross crimes. Cruelty and murder; frequent acts of gross injustice, are sometimes followed with deep horror of conscience; and a course of intemperance or lust is often attended with such dismal effects upon the body, fame and fortune, that those who survive it a few years, are a melancholy spectacle, and a burden to themselves and others. But it would be very loose morality, to suppose none to be bad men, but those who were under the habitual condemnation of conscience. On the contrary, the far greater part are blinded in their understandings, as well as corrupt in their practice.— They *deceive themselves*, and are at *peace*. Ignorance and inattention keep the multitude at peace. And *false principles* often produce self-justification and ill-founded peace, even in atrocious crimes. Even common robbers are sometimes found to justify themselves, and say—I must *live*—I have a right to my *share* of provision, as well as that proud fellow that rolls in his chariot.

The *result of the whole* is, that the obligation to virtue ought to take in all the following particulars: a sense of its own *intrinsic excellence*—of its *happy consequences in the present life*—a sense of *duty and subjection to the Supreme Being*—and a *hope* of future happiness, and *fear* of future misery from his decision.

Having considered the reasonings on the nature, foundation and obligation of virtue ; I now proceed to a more particular detail of the moral laws, and shall take them under the three heads formerly mentioned, Ethics, Politics, and Jurisprudence.

## LECTURE VI.



## OF ETHICS.

I. AS to the first, we must begin with what is usually called *the states of man*, or the several lights or relations in which he may be considered, as laying a foundation for duty. These states may be divided into two kinds—*Natural* and *Adventitious*.

II. The natural states may be enumerated thus: (1.) His state with regard to God, or natural relation to him. (2.) To his fellow-creatures. (3.) Solitude or society. (4.) Peace or war. Perhaps we may add to these (5.) His outward provision, plenty or want.

These are called *natural states*, because they are *necessary* and *universal*. All men, and all times, are related to God. They were made by him, and live by his providence. We must also necessarily know our fellow-creatures, and their state to be similar to ours in this respect and many others. A man must at all times be independent or connected with society—at peace with others, or at war—well provided, or in want.

The other states are called *adventitious*, because they are the effect of *choice* and the fruit of *industry*, as *marriage—family—mas-*



*ter and servant—particular voluntary societies—callings or professions—characters or abilities, natural and acquired—offices in a constituted society—property, and many particular modifications of each of these.*

In prosecuting the subject farther, and giving an analysis of the moral duties founded upon these states, I shall first take notice of our relation to God, with the proofs of his being and perfections; and then consider the moral laws under three heads: our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves.

## L OF OUR DUTY TO GOD.

To this place I have reserved what was to be said upon the proof of the being of God, the great foundation of all natural religion; without which, the moral sense would be weak and insufficient.

The proofs of *the being of God*, are generally divided into two kinds. *A priori*, and *a posteriori*. The first is, properly speaking, metaphysical reasoning downward from the first principles of science or truth, and inferring by just consequence the being and perfections of God. Clark's Demonstration, &c. (if there be any thing that should be called *a priori*, and if this is a conclusive method of reasoning) is as complete as any thing ever published; perhaps he has carried the principle as far as it will go.

This way of arguing begins by establishing our own existence from *consciousness*.

That we are not necessarily existent, therefore must have a cause; that something must have existed from all eternity, or nothing ever could have existed; that this being must exist by an *internal necessity of nature*; that what exists necessarily must exist alike *every where*; must be *perfect*; *act every where*; be *independent, omnipotent, omniscient, infinitely good, just, true*—Because, as all these are evidently perfections or excellencies, that which exists by a necessity of nature must be possessed of every perfection. And the contrary of these virtues implying *weakness, or insufficiency*, cannot be found in the infinite Being.

The other medium of proof, commonly called *a posteriori*, begins with contemplating the universe in all its parts; observing that it contains many irresistible proofs, that it could not be eternal, could not be without a cause; that this cause must be intelligent; and from the astonishing greatness, the wonderful adjustment and complication of things, concludes that we can set no bounds to the perfection of the Maker; because we can never exhaust the power, intelligence and benignity that we see in his works. In this way of arguing, we deduce the moral perfections of the Deity, from the faint resemblances of them that we see in ourselves. As we necessarily conceive justice, goodness, truth, &c. to be perfections or excellencies; we are warranted by the plainest

reason, to ascribe them to the Divine Being in an infinite degree.

There is perhaps at bottom *no difference* between these ways of reasoning, because they must in some degree rest upon a common principle, viz. *that every thing that exists must have a cause*. This is equally necessary to both the chains of reasoning, and must itself be taken for an original sentiment of nature, or an impression necessarily made upon us, from all that we see or are conversant with.

About this and some other ideas, great stir has been made by some infidel writers, particularly by David Hume; who seems to have industriously endeavoured to shake the certainty of our belief, upon *cause and effect*, upon *personal identity* and the idea of *power*. It is easy to raise metaphysical subtleties, and confound the understanding on such subjects. In opposition to this, some late writers have advanced, with great apparent reason, that there are certain *first principles* or dictates of *common sense*, which are either simple perceptions, or seen with intuitive evidence. These are the *foundation* of all reasoning, and without them, to *reason* is a word without a meaning. They can no more be proved than you can prove an axiom in mathematical science. These authors of Scotland have lately produced and supported this opinion, to resolve at once all

the refinements and metaphysical objections of some infidel writers.

There is a different sort of argument often made use of, or brought in aid of the others, for the being of God, viz. *the consent of all nations*, and the universal prevalence of that belief. I know not whether we must say, that this argument rests also upon the principle that nothing can exist without a cause, or upon the plan just now mentioned. If it is an universal dictate of our nature, we must take it as true immediately, without further examination.

An author I formerly mentioned has set this argument in a peculiar light, (Dr. Willson of New Castle.) He says, that we receive all our knowledge, as philosophers admit, by sensation and reflection. Now, from all that we see, and all the reflection and abstraction upon it we are capable of, he affirms it is impossible we could ever form the idea of *a spirit* or *a future state*. These ideas have, however, been *early* and *universal*, and therefore must have been communicated at first, and handed down by information and instruction from age to age. So that unless upon the supposition of the existence of God, and his imparting the knowledge of himself to men; it is *impossible* that any idea of him could ever have entered into the human mind. There is something ingenious, and a good deal of probability in this way of reasoning.

As to *the nature of God*, the first thing to

be observed, is *the unity* of God. This is sufficiently established upon the reasonings both a priori and posteriori. If these reasonings are just for the being of God, they are strictly conclusive for the unity of God. There is a *necessity* for the existence of one Supreme Being, the first cause, but no necessity for more; nay, one Supreme independent Being does *not admit* any more. And when we view the harmony, order and unity of design in the created system, we must be led to the belief of the unity of God.

Perhaps it may be thought an objection to this, (especially if we lay any stress on the universal sentiments of mankind,) that all nations have been so prone to the belief and worship of a plurality of gods. But this argument is rather specious than solid; as however prone men were to worship local inferior deities, they seem to have considered them only as *intermediate* divinities and intercessors between them and the *Supreme God*.

The perfections of God may be divided into two kinds, *Natural* and *Moral*.

I. The *natural* perfections of God are *spirituality, immensity, wisdom* and *power*.

We call these natural perfections, because they can be easily distinguished, and in idea at least separated, from *goodness of disposition*. It is highly probable indeed, that Supreme excellence, natural and moral, must

always reside in the same subject, and are truly inseparable; yet we distinguish them not only because the ideas are distinct, but because they are by no means in *proportion* to one another in inferior natures. Great powers of mind and perfection of body are often joined to malignity of disposition. It is not so, however, in God; for as his natural perfections are founded on reason, so his moral excellence is evidently founded in the moral sense or conscience which he hath implanted in us.

*Spirituality* is what we may call the *very nature* of God. It must be admitted that we cannot at present, form any complete or adequate idea of a spirit. And some, as you have heard formerly, insist that without revelation we could never have acquired the idea of it that we have. Yet there are many who have reasoned in a very strong and seemingly conclusive manner, to show that mind or intelligence must be a substance altogether distinct from matter. That all the known properties of matter are incapable of producing *thought*, as being wholly of a different kind—that matter as such, and universally, is *inert* and *divisible*; thought or intelligence, *active* and *uncompounded*. See the best reasoning on this subject in Baxter's *Immateriality of the soul*.

*Immensity* in the Divine Being, is that by which he is every where, and equally present. Metaphysicians, however, differ greatly upon

this subject. The Cartesians will not admit that place is at all applicable to spirits. They say it is an idea wholly arising from *extension*, which is one of the peculiar and essential qualities of matter. The Newtonians, however, who make so much use of the idea of *infinite space*, consider place as essential to all substance, spirit as well as matter. The difficulties are great on both sides. It is hard to conceive of spirit at all, separating from it the qualities of matter; and after we have attempted to do so, it seems to be bringing them back, to talk of place. And yet it seems not only hard, but impossible, to conceive of any real being without supposing it in some place, and particularly upon the immensity of the Deity; it seems to be putting created spirits too much on a level with the infinite Spirit, to deny his immensity. It is I think certain, they are either confined to *a place*, or so limited in their operations, as is no way so well expressed as by saying we are *here* and *no where else*. And in this sense both parties must admit the Divine immensity—that his agency is equal, universal and irresistible.

*Wisdom* is another natural attribute of God, implying infinite knowledge—that all things in all their relations, all things existing, and all things possible, are the objects of the divine knowledge. Wisdom is usually considered as respecting some *end* to be attained, and it implies the clear dis-

covery of the best and most effectual *means* of attaining it.

*Power* is the being able to do all things without limit or restraint. The omnipotence of God is always considered as an essential perfection, and seems to arise immediately from creation and providence. It is common to say that God can do all things, except such as imply a contradiction—such as to make a thing to be and not to be at the same time; but this is unnecessary and foolish in the way of an exception, for such things are not the objects of power at all. They are mere *absurdities* in our conception, and indeed we may say, of our own creation. All things are possible with God—nothing can withstand his power.



## LECTURE VII.



II. THE *moral perfections* of God are *holiness, justice, truth, goodness* and *mercy*.

*Holiness* is sometimes taken in a general and comprehensive sense, as being the *aggregate*, implying the presence of all moral excellence; yet it is sometimes used, and that both in the Scripture revelation and by heathen writers, as a *peculiar attribute*. In this limited sense it is extremely difficult to define or explain. Holiness is that character of God to which *veneration*, or the most profound reverence in us, is *the correspondent affection*. It is sometimes also expressed by *purity*, and when we go to form an idea of it, perhaps we can scarce say any thing better, than that it is *his being removed at an infinite distance from the grossness of material indulgence*.

*Justice* is an invariable determination to render to all their due. Justice seems to be founded on the strong and unalterable perception we have of right and wrong, good and evil, and particularly that the one deserves reward, and the other punishment. The internal sanction, or the external and providential sanction of natural laws, point

out to us the Justice of God. The chief thing that merits attention upon this subject is the controversy about what is called the *vindictive justice* of God. That is to say, is there in God, or have we a natural sense of the propriety of, *a disposition to inflict punishment, independently of the consequences, viz. the reformation of the offender, or the example of others.* This loose moralists often declaim against. Yet it seems plain, that the sense in our minds of good and ill desert, makes *guilt* the proper object of punishment *simply in itself.* This may have a relation to *general order* and *the good of the whole;* which, however, is out of our reach.

The *truth* of God is one of his perfections, greatly insisted upon in Scripture, and an essential part of natural religion. It is inseparable from infinite perfection; for any departure from truth must be considered as arising from *weakness* or *necessity.* What end could be served to a self-sufficient and all-sufficient Being, by falsehood or deception?

*Goodness* in God is a disposition to communicate happiness to others. This is easily understood. The creation is a proof of it—Natural and moral evil no just objection to it, because of the preponderancy of happiness.

*Mercy,* as distinguished from goodness or benignity, is his being of a placable nature

—Ready to forgive the guilty, or to remit deserved punishment. It has been disputed how far mercy or placability is discoverable by reason. It is not mercy or forgiveness, unless it would have been just at the same time to have punished. There are but two ways by which men from reason, may infer the attribute of mercy to belong to the Deity.

1. Because we ourselves are sensible of this disposition, and see in it a peculiar beauty.
2. From the forbearance of Providence, that sinners are not immediately overtaken with punishment, but have space given them to repent.—Yet as all the conclusions drawn from these principles must be vague and general, the expectations of the guilty, founded upon them, must be very uncertain. We must conclude therefore, that however stable a foundation there is for the other attributes of God in *nature* and *reason*, the way in which, and the terms on which, he will shew *mercy*, can be learned from *Revelation only*.

Having considered the being and perfections of God, we proceed to our duty to him. This may be considered in two views, as *general* and *special*.

1. By the first I understand our duty to *obey* him and *submit* to him in all things. This, you see, includes every branch of moral duty to our *neighbour* and *ourselves*, as well as to *God*; and so the particular parts of it will be considered afterwards. But in this place, considering every good action as an

act of obedience to God, we will a little attend to the *divine sovereignty*, and the foundation of it.

In speaking of the foundation of virtue, I took in a sense of dependence on, and subjection to God.—But as men are not to be deterred from bold inquiries, a further question is raised by some, viz. what is properly the *foundation* of the divine dominion? 1. Some found it directly upon *Omnipotence*. It is impossible to resist his power. This seems to lay us under a *necessity*, rather than to convince us of *duty*. We ought, however, to think and speak of this subject with reverence; and certainly Omnipotence seems to oblige us to *actual*, if it should not bring us to *willing* obedience. It is somewhat remarkable, that in the book of Job, composed on purpose to resolve some difficulties in providence, where God is brought in as speaking himself out of the whirlwind, he makes use of no other argument than his *tremendous majesty and irresistible power*. Yet to rest the matter wholly upon this, seems much the same as founding virtue on mere will;—therefore 2. some found the divine dominion on his *infinite excellence*, they say it is the law of reason that the *wisest* should rule, and therefore that infinite perfection is entitled to universal sway. Even this, taken separate and alone, does not seem wholly to satisfy the mind. If one person is wiser than another, it seems reasonable that the other should

*Learn* of him and *imitate* him ; but it scarcely seems a sufficient reason that the first should have *absolute authority*. But perhaps the weakness of the argument, taken in this view, may arise from the inconsiderable difference between man and man, when compared to the superiority of universal and unchangeable perfection. 3. Some found it upon *creation*. They say, that God has an *absolute property* in all his creatures ; he may therefore do what he will with his own. This no doubt, goes a good way, and carries considerable force with it to the mind ; the rather that, as you will afterwards see, it is something similar to this in us that lays the foundation of our most perfect rights, viz. That the product of our own industry is properly at our own disposal.

As upon the foundation of virtue I thought it necessary to unite the principles of different writers, so upon this subject, I think that *all the three particulars* mentioned ought to be admitted, as the grounds of the divine dominion. *Omnipotence, infinite excellence,* and the *original production* and *continual preservation* of all creatures.

II. Our duty to God may be considered *more especially*, as it points out the duties we owe *immediately to himself*. These may be divided into *internal* and *external*.

The *internal* are all included under the three following, *love, fear,* and *trust*.

The *love* of God, which is the first and

great duty both of natural and revealed religion, may be explained in a *larger* and more popular, or in a more precise and stricter way. In the first, love may be resolved into the four following acts, *esteem*, *gratitude*, *benevolence*, *desire*. These four will be found inseparable from true love; and it is pretty much in the same order, that the acts succeed one another.

Love is founded on *esteem*, on the real or supposed good qualities of the object. You can no more love that which you *despise*, than that which you *bate*. *Gratitude* is also inseparable from it;—to have a lively sense of favours received, and to esteem them for the sake of the person from whom they came. *Benevolence*, also, or rejoicing in the happiness and wishing well to the object. And lastly, *a desire of a place in his esteem*. Whatever we love, we desire to *possess*, as far as it is suited to our faculties.

The *stricter* and more precise method of considering the love of God, is to divide it into two branches, *benevolence* and *desire*. And indeed our affections to God seem to be capable of the same division as our affection to our fellow-creatures, *benevolent* and *selfish*. I think it undeniable, that there is a *disinterested* love of God, which terminates *directly upon himself*, without any immediate view to our own happiness—as well as a discovery of our *great interest* in his favour.

The second great duty to God is *fear*.

But here we must carefully distinguish this affection from one which bears the name, and is different from it—at least in a moral view it is altogether opposite.—*Dutiful fear* is what may be otherwise called *veneration*, and hath for its object the infinity of the Divine perfection in general, but particularly his *majesty* and *greatness*. The other is merely a fear of *evil* or *punishment* from Him: these are called sometimes a *filial* and a *servile* fear. The first *increases*, as men *improve* in moral excellence, and the other is *destroyed*. Perfect love casteth out fear. Perhaps, however opposite, as they have the same name, they may be said to be the *same natural affection*, only as it takes place in *innocent* or *holy*, and in *guilty* creatures. The same majesty of God, which produces *veneration* in the *upright*, produces *horror* and *apprehension of punishment* in the *guilty*.

The third great duty is *trust*. This is a continual dependence on God for every thing we need, together with an approbation of, and absolute resignation to his providence.

2. The *external* duties to God I shall briefly pass over, being only, all *proper and natural expressions of the internal sentiments*.

It may be proper, however, to take notice in general of the *worship* due to God; that whether we consider the nature of things, or the universal practice of mankind, in all ages, *worship*, and that not only *private*, but *public*

and *social worship*, is a duty of *natural religion*.

Some of the enemies of revealed religion have spoken with great virulence against this, as unreasonable, and even dishonourable to the Divine Being. The *substance* of what they say, is this, that as it would be no part of the character of an eminent and good man, to desire and take pleasure in *others praising him*, and recounting his good qualities, so it is absurd to suppose, that the Supreme Being is pleased with *incense, sacrifices and praises*. But it ought to be observed, that he does not require these acts and exercises as any gratification to Himself, but as in themselves *just and necessary*, and suited to the *relation* we stand in to Him, and useful for forming *our* temper and universal practice.

We ought also to remember, that we must not immediately and without discrimination, reason from what would be praise and blame-worthy among *men*, to what would be just or unjust in *God*, because the *circumstances* are very different. Besides, though for any man to desire the applause of his fellow-creatures, or be pleased with adulation, would be a mean and contemptible character, because indeed there is such unspeakable imperfection in the best of men, yet when any duty or sentiment is fully and manifestly due from man to man, there is nothing improper or dishonourable in *requiring*, or *ex-*



*pecting* it. Thus a *parent* requires respect and submission from his *children*, a *master* from his *servants*; and though the injury is merely personal, he thinks himself entitled to punish every expression of contempt or disregard. Again, every man who has bestowed *signal favours* upon another, expects to see evidence of a *grateful* and *sensible* mind, and severely condemns every sentiment or action that indicates a contrary disposition.

On the whole, then, we see that if the worship of God be what is due from us to Him, in consequence of the relation we stand in to Him, it is proper and necessary that he should require it. To honour God is to honour Supreme excellence; for him not to expect and demand it, would be to deny himself.

One other difficulty I shall touch upon a little. It respects *the duty of prayer*; and the objections lie equally against it on the footing of natural religion and revealed. The objections are two, 1. Why does God, who perfectly knows all our wants, require and expect prayer, before he will supply them? To this I would answer, that he supplies great multitudes of our wants without our asking it; and as to his *requiring* the duty of prayer, I say the same thing as of worship in general; it is reasonable and necessary to express, and to increase upon our minds, *our sense of dependence*, and thereby lay us on

der an obligation of properly improving what we receive.

2. The other objection is with regard to the force or efficacy of prayer. Why, it is said, should we pray, when the whole system of Divine Providence is fixed and unalterable? Can we possibly suppose that God will change his purposes, from a regard to our cries or tears? To this some answer no otherwise than as before, that without having any effect upon the *event*, it has only an effect upon *our minds*, in bringing us to a right temper. Dr. Leechman of Glasgow, in his discourse on prayer, makes no other answer to this difficulty. But I think, to rest it here, and admit that it has no influence in the way of *causality* upon the event, would in a great measure break the *force* and *servency* of prayer. I would therefore say further, that prayer has a *real efficacy* on the event, and just as much as any other second cause. The objection arises from going beyond our depth, and reasoning from the unchangeable purpose of God to human actions, which is always unjust and fallacious.—However unable we may be to explain it, notwithstanding the fixed plan of Providence, *there is a real influence of second causes*, both *natural* and *moral*, and I apprehend the connexion between cause and effect is similar in both cases. If it is fixed from eternity that there shall be a plentiful crop upon a certain field, I know that nothing whatsoever can

*prevent* it; if otherwise, the efforts of the whole creation cannot *produce* it; yet I know as certainly, that, *hypothetically*, if it is not *ploughed* and *sown*, there will be no grain upon it; and that if it be properly *manured* and *dressed*, it will probably be fruitful. Thus, in moral matters, *prayer* has as *real an influence* in procuring the *blessing*, as *ploughing* and *sowing* has in procuring the *crop*; and it is as consistent with the established order of nature and the certainty of events in the one case, as in the other: for this reason the stoical fate of old was called the *ignava ratio* of the stoics, as they sometimes made use of the above fallacious reasoning.

## LECTURE VIII.

II. WE come now to our *duty to man*. This may be reduced to a short sum, by ascending to its *principle*. *Love to others, sincere and active, is the sum of our duty.*

*Benevolence*, I formerly observed, ought not to be considered as the *whole* of virtue, but it certainly is the *principle* and *sum* of that branch of duty which regards *others*.

We may distinguish between *particular kind affections* and a *calm and deliberate good-will to all*.—The particular kind affections, as to *family, friends, country*, seem to be implanted by nature, to strengthen the *general principle*; for it is only or chiefly by doing good to those we are particularly related to, that we can promote the general happiness.

Particular kind affections should be *restrained* and *directed* by a calm good-will to all. Wherever our attachments to private persons prevent a *greater good*, they become *irregular* and *excessive*.

Some think that a calm and settled good-will to others is an *improvement* of the particular affections, and arises from the more *narrow* to the more *extensive*; from family, friends, country, to all our fellow-creatures. But it seems more reasonable to say, that the

general affection is a dictate of our conscience of a *superior kind*. If it were only an *increase* and *extension* of the private affection, it would grow more *weak*, as the distance from ourselves increased, whereas in fact the more enlarged affections are intended to be more *powerful* than the confined.

When we are speaking of kind affections, it will not be improper to observe that some unbelievers have objected against the gospel, that it does not recommend *private friendship* and the *love of our country*. But if fairly considered, as the Scripture, both by *example* and *precept*, recommends all particular affections, so it is to its honour that it sets the *love of mankind* above them every one; and by so much insisting on the forgiveness of injuries and the love of enemies, it has carried benevolence to its greatest perfection. The parable of the Samaritan, in answer to the question, who is my neighbour? is one of the greatest beauties in moral painting any where to be seen.

The love of our *country*, to be sure, is a noble and enlarged affection; and those who have sacrificed private ease and family relations to it, have become illustrious; yet the love of *mankind* is still greatly superior. Sometimes attachment to country appears in a littleness of mind, thinking all other nations inferior, and foolishly believing that knowledge, virtue and valour are all confined to

themselves. As the Romans long ago made the *Punica fides* to mean deceit, so there are not wanting among us those who think that all the French are interested, treacherous and cowardly.

On the great law of love to others, I shall only say further, that it ought to have for its *object* their *greatest and best interest*, and therefore implies wishing and doing them good in *soul and body*.

It is necessary now to descend to *the application of this principle to particular duties*, and to examine what are the rights or *claims* that one man has upon another.

*Rights and obligations are correlative terms*. Whatever *others* have a just right or title to claim from *me*, that is, *my duty*, or what I am obliged to do to *them*.

*Right* in general may be reduced, as to its *source*, to the supreme law of moral duty; for whatever men are in *duty* obliged to do, that they have a *claim* to, and other men are considered as under an obligation to *permit* them. Again, as our own happiness is a lawful object or end, we are supposed to have each a right to prosecute this; but as our prosecutions may *interfere*, we *limit* each other's rights; and a man is said to have a right or power to promote his own happiness only by those means which are not in themselves criminal or injurious to others.

Rights may be divided or classed in seven-

ral different ways; an attention to all of which is of use on this subject.

Rights may be 1. *Natural* or *Acquired*. *Natural rights* are such as are *essential* to man, and *universal-acquired* are those that are the *fruits of industry*, the effects of *accident* or *conquest*. A man has a natural right to act for his own preservation, and to defend himself from injury; but not a natural right to domineer, to riches (comparatively speaking) or to any particular office in a constituted state.

2. Rights are considered as *perfect* and *imperfect*. Those are called *perfect rights* which can be *clearly ascertained* in their circumstances, and which we may make use of *force* to obtain, when they are denied us. *Imperfect rights* are such as we may *demand*, and others *ought* to give us; yet we have no title to *compel* them. Self-preservation is a perfect right, but to have a grateful return for a favour is not a perfect right. All the duties of *justice* are founded on the *perfect* rights; those of *mercy* generally on the *imperfect* rights.

The *violation* of an imperfect right is often as great an act of *immorality* as that of a perfect right. It is often as immoral, or more so, to *refuse to supply the necessitous*, or to do it sparingly, as to commit a *small injury* against a man's *person* or *fortune*. Yet the last is the breach of a perfect right, and the other of an imperfect.

Human laws reach only, in *ordinary cases*, to the perfect rights. Sometimes imperfect rights, by being *carried* far, become perfect, as humanity and gentleness in a parent to a child may be so grossly violated, as to warrant the interposition of human authority.

3. Rights are *alienable* and *unalienable*. The first we *may*, according to justice and prudence, surrender or give up by our own act; the others we may not. A man may give away his own goods, lands, money. There are several things which he *cannot* give away, as a right over his own knowledge, thoughts, &c. Others, which he *ought* not, as a right to judge for himself in all matters of religion, his right to self-preservation, provision, &c. Some say that *liberty is unalienable*, and that those who have even given it away may lawfully resume it.

The distinction between rights as *alienable* and *unalienable* is very different from that of *natural* and *acquired*. Many of the rights which are strictly natural and universal, may be alienated in a state of society for the good of the whole, as well as of private persons; as for example, the right of self-defence; this is in a great measure given up in a state of civil government into the hands of the public—and the right of doing justice to ourselves or to others in matters of property is wholly given up.

4. Rights may be considered as they differ with regard to their *object*. (1.) Rights we



have over our own *persons* and *actions*. This class is called *liberty*. (2.) Rights over *things* or *goods* which belong to *us*. This is called *property*. (3.) Rights over the *persons* and *actions* of *other men*. This is called *authority*. (4.) Rights in the *things* which are the property of *others*, which are of *several sorts*.

When we come to the second great division of moral philosophy, *politics*, the above distinctions will be more fully explained—at present it is sufficient to point at them, in order to show what are the great out-lines of duty from man to man.

Our *duty to others*, therefore, may be all comprehended in these two particulars, *justice* and *mercy*.

*Justice* consists in *giving* or *permitting* others to enjoy whatever they have a *perfect right to*—and making such an use of our own rights as not to encroach upon the rights of others. There is one writer, David Hume, who has *derided* the duty of justice, resolving it wholly into *power* and *conveniency*, and has affirmed that *property is common*, than which nothing can be more contrary to reason; for if there is any thing clear as a dictate of reason, it is, that there are many rights which men severally possess, which others ought not to violate. The foundation of property in goods, I will afterwards show you, is plainly laid in the social state.

Another virtue which this author ridicules is *chastity*. This however, will be found to

be included in *justice*, and to be found in the sentiments of all nations, and to have the clearest foundation both in *nature* and public *utility*.

*Mercy* is the other great branch of our duty to man, and is the exercise of the *benevolent principle* in general, and of the *several particular kind affections*. Its acts, generally speaking, belong to the class of imperfect rights, which are strongly binding upon the conscience, and absolutely necessary to the subsistence of human society; yet such as cannot be enforced with rigour and precision by human laws.

Mercy may be generally explained by a *readiness to do all the good offices to others that they stand in need of, and are in our power; unless they are opposed to some perfect right, or to an imperfect one of greater moment.*

## LECTURE IX.



III. THE third class of moral duties is what contains *our duty to ourselves*.

This branch of duty is as *real* and as much *founded* in the moral principle, as any of the former—Conscience as clearly testifies the evil of neglecting it—and vicious conduct in this respect does generally lead us directly not only to misery, but to shame.

We may, I think, divide our duties to ourselves into *two heads*, which will be both distinct and comprehensive. 1. *Self-government*. 2. *Self-interest*.

The first of these is to keep our thoughts, *desires* and *affections*, in *due moderation*. If it be asked what is due moderation? I answer, it may be discovered three ways. (1.) When the indulgence interferes with our duty to God, (2.) To ourselves, and (3.) to our neighbour.

When our thoughts or desires are such as to be contrary to the *love*, *fear*, or *trust* we owe to *God*, then they are to be *restrained* and *brought into subjection*—Thus are generated the virtues of *humility*, *contentment*, *patience*, and such as are allied to them.

When our thoughts and inward temper

are such as to be any way injurious to *others*, they must be governed and restrained; hence arises the obligation to guard against all the *immoral passions*, which will produce *meekness* and *composure of spirit*.

And when we have got but a little experience, we shall speedily find that an *excessive* indulgence of any passion, *love, hatred, anger, fear*, discomposes us exceedingly, and is an *evil* instead of a *blessing*. We shall therefore perceive the necessity of *continence, self-denial, fortitude, restraint, and moderation* in every thing, how good soever.

2. The other general branch of duty to ourselves may be called *self-interest*. This, taking in natural religion, includes our relation to the Divine Being, and attending particularly to that of procuring his favour. Therefore it is a *prime part* of our duty to ourselves, to guard against any thing that may be hurtful to our *moral character or religious hopes*.

We ought also to be active and diligent in acquiring every thing necessary for *life* and *comfort*. Most of our duties to ourselves resemble the duties of *justice* and *mercy* to others. If there are certain offices due to *them*, and if they have rights and claims in consequence of their state and relations, the same is the case with *ourselves*. We are therefore to take all proper methods to preserve and acquire *the goods* both of *mind* and *body*. To acquire *knowledge*, to

preserve *health, reputation, possessions*. The whole must be kept within some *limits*; chiefly we must guard against interfering with *the rights of others*.

It will be proper, before concluding this part of the subject, to take notice of the opinions of the ancients, particularly their enumeration of what are called the cardinal virtues.

Their cardinal virtues were *justice, temperance, prudence* and *fortitude*. *Justice* included the whole of our duty to our *neighbour*. *Humanity* or benevolence, you see, is kept out of view, though a virtue of the first class; but all its exercises are with them ranked under the head of justice. *Temperance* was by them considered as much more extensive, than being moderate in the use of meats and drink, to which the English word is chiefly confined. The *Egkrateia* of the Greeks signified, not only abstinence in *meat and drink*, but *continence* or *purity*, and a moderation of *all* our desires, of whatever kind, of *fame and riches*, as well as *pleasures*. *Prudence*, even in the way they generally explain it, seems scarcely to be a *moral*, or so much as a *natural* quality. Prudence, they say, is taking the *wisest course* to obtain some *good end*. The placing this among the *cardinal* virtues will show how matters stood among them. *Great parts* or *talents* were in high esteem. They did not very fully distinguish between a *good man* and a *great*

man. Prudence seems rather an *embellishment* of an illustrious character, than a *moral virtue*. Another reason why prudence seems to have held such a place among the ancients was, that their chief foundation for virtue was *interest*, or what will produce happiness. The inquiry upon this subject was, what is the *summum bonum*. Now to this, prudence is very necessary. Agreeably to all this, they commonly called the virtuous man, the *wise man*; and he was always an *hero*.

*Fortitude* is easily understood, and may be considered in *two lights*, as *active* and *passive*; which gives the two great virtues of *patience* and *valour*.

One of the most remarkable qualities in morals among the ancients, was the debate upon the Stoical position, that *pain is no evil*, nor *pleasure any good*. This arises from comparing *external things* with the *temper of the mind*, when it appears without doubt that the latter is of much more consequence to happiness than the former. They used to reason thus,—Outward possessions, when bestowed upon a *bad* man, make him no *better*, but *worse*, and finally more *miserable*. How then can these be goods in *themselves*, which become good or evil, according to the *state* of him that uses them. They were therefore called the *things indifferent*. There was something strained and extravagant in some of their writings, and perhaps ostentatious, yet a great deal of true and just reason-

ing. The most beautiful piece of antiquity, in the moral way, is the *Tablature of Cebes*.

Let us now recapitulate what we have gone through, and then add some observations or corollaries on the morality of actions. We have considered,

I. The nature of man.

II. The nature, foundation, and obligation of virtue.

III. Have given a sort of general analysis of the moral laws, as pointing out our duty to God, to our neighbour, and ourselves.

We must now consider all morality in general as *conformity to a law*. We have seen above *whence* this law is collected, and derives its authority. Men may differ, not only as to the *foundation*, but as to the *import* or meaning of the law in some particulars, but it is always supposed that the law *exists*.

The morality of actions may be considered in two different lights, but these very nearly related to each other. I. As they are ranked and disposed of by the law itself. II. In the conformity or opposition of the actions to the law.

I. Under the first view, an action is either *commanded*, *forbidden*, or *permitted*.

*Commanded* duties oblige *absolutely*, and as casuists used to say, *semper non vtro ad semper*; that is to say, they are obligatory upon *all persons*, at *the seasons* that are proper for them, but not upon *every person* at *every time*; because then there could be but

one moral duty; all men are obliged to worship God, but this only at *certain times*, other duties have also their place and season.

*Prohibitions* oblige *semper et ad semper*, all persons at all times.—We must not *lie*—this obliges every man at *every moment*, because no time or circumstances can make it lawful.

On permission we may observe several things.

1. There is (as some say,) a *two-fold* permission, the one *full* and *absolute*, which not only gives us a *right* to certain things with impunity, but implies a *positive approbation* of the legislator; and the other implies only that the action is *left at large*, being neither commanded nor forbidden.

2. Permission in *natural* laws always implies the *approbation* of the legislator, and whatever is done in consequence of it, is *innocently* done, for God and conscience do not permit, or pass uncondemned, any bad action.

3. It is otherwise in *human* laws. If they leave any action open, it may be done with *impunity*, and yet by no means with *approbation*. I may have a right by human laws to say things in a covered or couched manner, which yet may carry in them the highest degree of malignity.

4. The truth is, when we consider the morality of action in a *strict* or *proper manner*, the whole class of *permitted actions* van-



ishes. They become by their *intention* and *application* either *good* or *bad*.

Considering actions in their *conformity to the laws*, a distinction arises similar to the former, into *good* or just, *bad* and *indifferent*.

A *good* action must be *wholly* conformable to the law in its *substance*, and in all its *circumstances*. It is not enough that it be *materially* good, the *time* must be proper, and the *intention* laudable.

A *bad* action is that, which, either in *substance* or in any *circumstance*, is contrary to the law.

In consequence of this, strictly and properly speaking, all truly good or just actions are *equally* so, arising from a *perfect* conformity to the law, as all *straight* lines are *equally* straight. But all bad actions are not equally bad, as lines may be bent in a *different degree* from the straight direction.

*Indifferent* actions, if there are any truly such, are those that are *permitted*, and neither commanded nor forbidden by the law. But when we consider the *spirit* and *principles* of true morality, we shall find no actions wholly *indifferent*; because we are under an obligation to promote the happiness of ourselves and others, to which *every* action may be applied *immediately* or *remotely*; and *subjection to the Divine will* may make a part of our design, in doing or forbearing any thing whatever.

In estimating the morality of actions seve-

ral circumstances must be considered, 1. the *good* done, 2. the *principle* from which it flows,—self-interest of the contracted kind, benevolence, or hope of reward. 3. The *hindrances* or *opposition* that must be surmounted, as interest, inclination, difficulty. An objection seems to arise from this, not easily solved. If an action is the more virtuous, the more *opposition*, internal and external, that is overcome, then the *longer* a man has had the *habit* of virtue, and the more completely it is formed, the *less merit* in his actions. It seems also to take away all moral excellence from the *Deity*, who cannot be supposed to have the least *opposition* to encounter, either from within or without. This objection cannot be easily removed, but by saying, that the opposition is in no other respect an evidence of the good moral temper, but as it shows *the strength of that inclination* that overcomes it, and therefore, when a moral habit is so strong as to overcome and annihilate *all* opposition, it is so much the *more* excellent.

An action, good in *itself*, may be made criminal by an *evil intention*.

But no action, in *itself* evil, can be made lawful or laudable by a *good intention*.

A man is obliged to follow the dictates of conscience: yet a *mistaken conscience* does not wholly absolve from guilt, because he ought to have been at more pains to obtain *information*.

An action is not virtuous in *proportion* to its opposite being vicious. It is no *high* degree of virtue to *love* our offspring or *provide* for a family; but to *neglect* either is exceedingly vicious.

One phenomenon in human nature, nearly connected with the moral feelings, has been particularly considered by some writers, viz. that there is such a disposition in the generality of men to crowd to see *objects of distress*, as an extraordinary public execution. What is the desire that *prompts* to it? Is the sight of misery a pleasant feeling? Some resolve it merely into *curiosity*, which they consider as a natural and original impression. But there seems to be something in it different from *novelty*. Others say it arises from *benevolence*, and is an exercise of *compassion*, and that we have a strong natural impulse to the affection of *pity*, and really feel a pleasure in indulging it. But though every well disposed mind is highly susceptible of pity, at least of all the benevolence and help that pity suggests when the object presents itself, we can scarcely say that the feeling is *pleasant*, or that we have a *desire after such objects*, in order to the gratification.

They who reason on the *selfish scheme*, as usual, resolve all into *private interest*; they say we delight to see objects of distress, because it gives us a *secret satisfaction* in reflecting upon our own *different situation*. I believe there is such a satisfaction in *narrow*

and *contracted* minds ; but to those tolerably disposed, it has an *opposite* effect ; it makes them rather consider the calamities which they *themselves* are *subject* to, than those from which they are *free*.

Perhaps it would be best to take *more than one principle* to account for this effect: *Curiosity* must make a part, and probably *humanity* and *compassion* also contribute to it. It seems to be thought some little *alleviation* to the sufferer's misery when others *pity* him—Yet prudent persons, knowing how *unavailing* this pity is, often choose to be *absent*.

*Sympathy* is a particular affection in aid of benevolence—Yet like all other private affections, when it is not *moderated*, it prevents its own effect—One deeply affected with the view of an object of distress, is often thereby *incapacitated* to assist him.

Another question is sometimes subjoined to the above, why men have pleasure in seeing *Tragedy*, which is a striking representation of a melancholy catastrophe. As far as the subject differs from *Comedy*, it may be accounted for on the same principles with the desire to see objects of distress—But one powerful principle leads both to *Comedy* and *Tragedy*—a *pleasure in the imitative arts*, an *exact portrait* of any object whatever gives the highest pleasure, even though the *object itself* were originally *terrible* or *disgusting*.

We see plainly, that an indulgence of the pleasure given by a fine performance is what crowds the theatre. Unhappily, to give greater pleasure to a corrupt mind, they often invent such scenes, and conduct the matter so, as to make the stage the greatest enemy to virtue and good morals.

## LECTURE X.



## OF POLITICS.

POLITICS contain *the principles of social union, and the rules of duty in a state of society.*—This is but another and more complete view of the same things, drawn out more fully, and applied to particular cases. *Political law is the authority of any society, stamp upon moral duty.*

The first thing to be considered, in order to see upon what principles society is formed, is the state immediately *previous* to the social state. This is called *the state of nature*—Violent and unnecessary controversies have been made on that subject. Some have denied that any such thing ever existed, that since there were men, they have always been *in a social state*. And to be sure, this is so far true, that in no example or fact could it ever *last* long. Yet it is impossible to consider society as a *voluntary* union of particular persons, without supposing those persons in a state somewhat *different*, before *this union* took place—There are rights therefore belonging to a state of nature, different from those of a social state.

And *distinct societies*, or states indepen-

dent, are at *this moment* in a state of nature, or natural liberty, with regard to each other.

Another famous question has been, Is the state of nature, a state of *war* or *peace*? Hobbes, an author of considerable note, but of very illiberal sentiments in politics, is a strenuous advocate for a state of nature being a state of *war*. Hutchinson and Shaftsbury plead strongly, that a state of nature is a state of *society*. However *opposite* and *hostile* their opinions seem to be with regard to each other, it seems no hard matter to *reconcile* them. That the principles of our nature lead to society—that our *happiness* and the *improvement of our powers* are only to be had in society, is of the most undoubted certainty—and that in our *nature*, as it is *the work of God*, there is a real *good-will and benevolence* to others: but on the other hand, that our nature as it is *now*, when free and independent, is *prone to injury*, and consequently to *war*, is equally manifest, and that in a state of natural liberty, there is no other way but *force*, for preserving *security* and *repelling injury*. The inconveniences of the natural state are very many.

One class of the above-mentioned writers say, that *nature* prompts to society, and the other, that *necessity* and *interest* oblige to it—*both* are equally true.

Supposing then the state of natural liberty antecedent to society to be a reality, let us consider the *perfect* and *imperfect rights* be-

longing to that state, that we may see more distinctly *how*, and *why*, they *differ* in a social state.

The perfect rights in a state of natural liberty, are, 1. a right to *life*. 2. A right to employ his *faculties* and *industry* for his *own use*. 3. A right to things that are *common* and *necessary*, as *air, water, earth*. 4. A right to *personal liberty*. 5. *A power over his own life*, not to throw it away unnecessarily, but for a good reason. 6. *A right of private judgment* in matters of opinion. 7. A right to *associate*, if he so incline, with any person or persons, whom he can *persuade*, not *force*,—Under this is contained the right to *marriage*. 8. A right to *character*, that is to say, *innocence*, not fame—It is easy to perceive that all these rights belong to a state of natural liberty, and that it would be unjust and unequal for any individual to hinder or abridge another, in any one of them, without *consent*, or unless it be in just *retaliation* for injury received.

The *imperfect natural rights* are very *numerous*. But they are nearly the same in a state of *nature* as in a state of *society*, as *gratitude, compassion, mutual good offices*—if they will be no injury to the person performing them—Indeed, they *must* be the same in a *natural* and in a *social state*, because the very *definition* of an imperfect right is such, as you cannot use *force* to obtain. Now, what you ought not to use force



to obtain in a state of natural liberty, human laws, in a well constituted state, will not give you.

*Society* I would define to be *an association or compact of any number of persons, to deliver up or abridge some part of their natural rights, in order to have the strength of the united body, to protect the remaining, and to bestow others.*

Hobbes and some other writers of the former age treat with great contempt, this which is generally called the social compact. —He insists that *monarchy* is the law of nature. Few are of his sentiments now, at least in Britain, yet it is proper to trace them to the foundation.

It is to be admitted, that society *began first insensibly by families, and almost necessarily.* Hence *parental authority was the first law*; and perhaps it extended for two or three generations in the early ages. Though the patrons of monarchy use this as an argument, it does *not favour* their scheme.— This which they call the patriarchal government, could not extend far; or supposing it could, there would be but *one rightful king* in all the earth, the *lineal descendant of Adam's eldest son*; not to mention that the very order of succession in hereditary right has never been uniform, and is but of late settled in the European nations.

The truth is, though man for wise reasons, afterwards to be noticed, continues *longer* in

a family dependence, than other animals, yet *in time* he becomes *sui juris*; and when their numbers are increased, when they either continue together, or remove and form distinct societies, it is plain that there must be *supposed* an expressed or implied contract.

Some say there is no *trace* or *record* of any such contract in the *beginning* of any society. But this is *no argument* at all, for things inseparable from, and essential to any state, commonly take place so *insensibly*, that their *beginning* is not observed.

When persons believe themselves, upon the whole, rather *oppressed* than *protected* in any society, they think that they are at liberty, either to *rebel* against it, or *fly* from it; which plainly implies that their being subject to it arose from a *tacit consent*.

Besides, in *migrations* and *planting of colonies*, in all ages, we see evident traces of an original contract and consent taken to the principles of union.

From this view of society as a *voluntary compact*, results this principle, that men are *originally*—and by *nature equal*, and consequently *free*.

*Liberty* either *cannot*, or *ought not* to be given up in the social state.—The end of the union should be the protection of liberty, as far as it is a blessing. The definition of liberty in a constituted government, will be afterwards explained.

Some observe, that *few* nations or socie-

ties in the world have had their constitutions formed on the principles of liberty : perhaps not *one twentieth* of the states that have been established since the beginning of the world have been settled upon principles altogether *favourable to liberty*. This is no just argument against natural liberty and the rights of mankind ; for it is certain, that *the public good* has always been the real *aim* of the people in general, in forming and entering into any society. It has also constantly been at least the *professed* aim of legislators. Therefore the *principles* seems to have been admitted, only they have failed or been disappointed in *practice*, by *mistake* or *deceit*. Though perhaps not one twentieth part of mankind have any tolerable skill in the *fine arts*, it does not follow that there are *no such arts*, or that the *principles* of them are not founded in nature.

*Reason* teaches natural liberty, and *common utility* recommends it. Some nations have seen this more clearly than others, or have more happily found the means of establishing it.

Here perhaps we should consider a little the question, whether it is lawful *to make men or to keep them slaves, without their consent* ? This will fall afterwards to be considered more fully : in the mean time, observe that in *every state* there must be some *superior* and others *inferior*, and it is hard to fix the *degree* of subjection that may fall

to the lot of particular persons. Men may become slaves, or their persons and labour be put wholly in the power of others, *by consent*. They may also sometimes, in a constituted state, be made slaves by *force*, as a *punishment* for the commission of crimes. But it is certainly unlawful to make *inroads* upon others, *unprovoked*, and take away their liberty by no better right than *superior power*.

It has sometimes been doubted, whether it is lawful to take away the liberty of others *for life*, even on account of *crimes committed*. There can be no strong reason given against this, except that which is supposed to operate in Great Britain against making malefactors slaves, that it would be *unfavourable to rational liberty* to see any rank of men in chains. But setting this aside, it seems plain, that if men may *forfeit their lives* to the society, they may also *forfeit their liberty*, which is a less precious blessing. It seems also more agreeable both to equity and public utility to punish some sort of crimes with hard labour, than death. Imprisonment for life has been admitted and practised by all nations—Some have pleaded for making *slaves of the barbarous nations*—that they are actually brought into a more *eligible state*, and have more of the *comforts of life*, than they would have had in their own country. This argument may *alleviate*, but does not *justify* the practice. It cannot be called a

more *eligible* state, if less *agreeable* to themselves.

Upon the whole, there are *many unlawful ways* of making slaves, but also *some that are lawful*—And the practice seems to be countenanced in the law of Moses, where rules are laid down for their treatment, and an estimation of injuries done to them, different from that of free men. I do not think there lies any *necessity* on those who *found* men in a state of slavery, to make them free *to their own ruin*. But it is very doubtful whether any *original* cause of servitude can be defended, by *legal punishment* for the commission of crimes. *Humanity* in the manner of treating them is manifestly a dictate of *reason* and *nature*, and I think also of *private*, and *public utility*, as much as of either.

The next step in opening the principles of the social state, is to consider the *foundation, establishment* and *extent* of *property*.

Some begin this by considering the property of man in general, in the *inferior creatures*. Has he any right to use the lower irrational animals for *labour*, or *food*, or *both*?

It is needless to refine too much upon this subject. To use them for *labour* seems evidently *lawful*, as they are inferior, with *strength fitted for it*, and strength which they could not employ for the improvement and cultivation of the earth *without the direction of man*. They seem to be to man, some how

as the *body* to the *mind*. They help to produce food for *themselves*; and so increase their *number* and receive much more *sensual pleasure*, sharing, in all respects, with their masters, the fruit of their toil.

To use them for food is thus argued to be lawful.—If suffered *all* to live, they would become too *numerous*, and could not be *sustained*; so that death to *many* of them in a much *worse* way must be the certain consequence. Further, *nature* seems to dictate the use of them for food in the plainest manner; for they are food for *one another* in a regular gradation, the *insect* to the *birds* and *fishes*, many of them to the *beasts*; and the *smaller* to the *greater* or the *tamer* to the *more rapacious* of every order.

If we take *tradition* or *Revelation* for our guide, the matter is *plain*; that God made man *lord* of the works of his hands; and put *under him* all the other creatures. Only it appears that the grant of animal food was made *no earlier* than to Noah, after the flood.

Let us next consider the establishment of *private property*. *Private property* is every particular person's having a *confessed and exclusive right* to a certain portion of the goods which serve for the support and *conveniency of life*.

In a very imperfect state of society *community of goods* may subsist in a great degree, and indeed its subsisting is one of the

surest signs of an *imperfect* state of society. Some attempts have been made in *civilized* states to introduce it, but without any considerable effect, except in *Sparta*, the constitution of which was very singular. In *small voluntary societies*, especially of the religious kind, it may be established, and will continue so long as the morals of the society are pure. But in civil society *fully formed*, especially if the state is at all *extensive*, or intended to be so, private property is *essentially necessary*, and founded upon the *reason of things* and *public utility*. The reasons of it are, 1. without private property *no laws* would be *sufficient* to compel *universal industry*. There never was such a purity of manners and zeal for the public, in the individuals of a great body, but that many would be *idle* and *slothful*, and maintain themselves upon the *labour of others*.

2. There is no reason to expect, in the present state of human nature, that there would be a *just and equal distribution* to every one according to his *necessity*, nor any room for *distinction* according to *merit*.

3. There would be *no place* for the exercise of some of the *noblest affections* of the human mind, as *charity, compassion, beneficence, &c.*

4. Little or no *incitement* to the *active virtues, labour, ingenuity, bravery, patience, &c.*

Some have laid down schemes for making property *common*, as Sir Thomas Moore

in his Utopia ; but in general they are *chimerical* and *impracticable*. There is no instance *in fact* where any state that made a figure in the social life had their goods wholly in common. Sparta had the most of it, but it was a very small state, and limited in its views ; besides there was something so *singular* in the whole constitution of the Spartan government, that its subsisting so long, remains a *phenomenon* for politicians and reasoners yet to account for.

Supposing private property to be *essential*, or at least *useful* in the social state, the next question is, *how does this property take its rise, or by what ways is it acquired?*

The original ways of acquiring property may be reduced to these two, 1. *Prior occupation*, 2. *Our own industry*.

As to the first of these, it may be analysed thus. Of the things that lay in *common* for the use of man, I have a right to take what is *convenient* for me, and after I have taken it, no body can have a *better* right, nor consequently any *title* to take it from me.

But many questions, difficult to be resolved, arise from the application of this principle. How *far* does this right extend? Must I take only what is sufficient for the *present moment*, or may I provide for *future* necessities and enjoyment. In vacant lands must I take only what *I* and my *present followers* can *sufficiently occupy*, or may I *touch a continent* and call it *mine*, though I



shall not be able to fill it in many ages. In answer, *common utility* must be the rule in all these cases; and any thing more particular must be reserved till we come to the law of nations.

Some say that the *water* in large bays and rivers ought to be *common* to all, because it is *inexhaustible*, and one's using it cannot waste or spoil it for the use of others. But the *security of societies* will point out the *measure* of property that must be in all those things.

The *extent* or *object* of property contains three particulars, 1. A right to the *fullest use*. Whatever is a person's *property*, he has a right to do with it as he *pleases*, with this *single exception*, if it may be called so, that he may not use it to the *injury of others*. Full property has no other exception, unless you call *this* an exception, that if any man would *wantonly* destroy the *fruits of the earth*, or his own *habitation*; in that case, though they were his *own*, people would *hinder him*, as supposing him to be *mad*, and deprive him not only of *that liberty*, but of *all other*.

2. Property implies a right of *exclusion*. We may *hinder* others from any way *intermeddling* with what is our property. This seems essential to the idea. Giving a *full right* to *one*, implies that *others* have *none*.

3. It implies a *power to alienate*. That is to say, a right of *alteration*, *commutation*, *do-*

*nation, during life, and disposal at death.* Thus property is said to be *perpetual*.

There are certain things called by Civilians *Res nullius*, such as *temples, public edifices, gates, and walls of cities, &c.* Temples used to be said to be *given to God*, and in the laws of civilized states, attention is paid to this circumstance. But as to the *property* or *use*, the case of them, and of all the other things mentioned, is very clear. They are under the *inspection of the magistrate*, or such persons as represent the community, and are by them kept for *common use*.

## LECTURE XL

—0000—

IN the social life in general we may consider, I. *Domestic*. II. *Civil Society*.

The first of these we must consider as implying and made up of *several relations*, the chief of which are 1. the relation of *marriage*, 2. that of *parents and children*, 3. that of *master and servant*.

In *marriage* we ought to observe, that though all creatures may be said to be propagated in a way in a great degree *similar*, yet there is something peculiarly *distinguished, dignified, and solemn*, in marriage among men. This distinction is *necessary*, and founded in *reason and nature*.

*Human creatures* at their *birth* are in a state *weaker* and more *helpless* than any other animals. They also arrive much more *slowly* at *maturity*, and need by far most *assistance* and *cultivation*. Therefore a *particular union of the parents* is absolutely *necessary*, and that upon such powerful principles as will secure their *common care*. Marriage is a relation expressly founded upon this *necessity*, and must be so conducted as to ascertain the *property of the offspring*, and to promise the most *assiduous, prudent and extensive care*.

This is the foundation of marriage drawn from the *public good*. But we ought also to observe, that man is manifestly superior in *dignity* to the *other animals*, and it was intended that all his enjoyments, and even his indulgence of *instinctive propensities*, should be of a more *exalted* and *rational* kind than theirs. Therefore the propensity of the sexes to one another is not only reined in by *modesty*, but is so ordered as to require that *reason* and *friendship*, and some of the *noblest affections*, should have place. And it is certain that they have, if not a more *violent*, at least a more *lasting* and *uniform* influence, in the married state, than *sensual desire*.

It is further observed by moral writers, that though *beauty* and *personal attraction* may be considered as the *first* motives, yet these are always supposed to be indications of something excellent in the *temper within*. So that even *love of beauty*, in man, is an *attachment to moral excellence*. Let a person attend with seriousness, and he will find that the utmost perfection of form in an *idiot*, or one thoroughly known to be of a very *bad temper*, is really no object of *desire*. Though in those who are little known, it is apt to prejudice the *ignorant* and *unwary* to judge favourably of the person.

The *particulars* which reason and nature point out, relating to the marriage contract, are as follow :

1. That it be between *one man* and *one*

woman. *Polygamy* is condemned by nature; for it is found that the *males* born are to the *females*, as 13 to 12, or as some say, as 20 to 19, the *overplus* being to supply the greater waste of the *male* part of the species by *war* and *dangerous occupations*, *hard labour*, and *travelling* by land and sea.

2. The *fundamental* and *essential* part of the contract is *fidelity* and *chastity*. This must immediately appear to be essential to the purpose of the union. Some writers say that this is especially binding upon the *woman*, in order to ascertain the *offspring*; but every body must see the absurdity of *any distinction*, because the contract would neither be *equal*, nor likely to be *steadily observed*, if it were not *mutual*. Besides, as a late author has well observed, if *chastity* be a *female virtue*, how can *men* be *unchaste* without *infringing* upon it.

3. The contract should be *for life*—otherwise it would be *short*, *uncertain*, and *mutual love* and *industry* *greatly weakened*.

4. If *superiority* and *authority* be given to the *man*, it should be used with so much *gentleness* and *love* as to make it a state of as great *equality* as possible. Hutchinson and some other writers say, there should be *no superiority*, and that their property, being *common*, should not be alienated by the one without the other. Others think that *perfect equality* of power in two persons is not con-

sistent with *order*, and the *common interest*, and therefore give authority to the *man*; and the laws of most nations give the man the *disposal* of property, with the *reservation of particular rights* to the woman.

Some heathen writers gave the man power of *life and death* over the woman, a thing evidently *barbarous and unjust*.

5. Marriages are sometimes dissolved by *divorces*, which our law permits only on *three accounts*—*adultery, wilful and obstinate desertion* and *incapacity*. The first two of these founded on the New Testament, and the last on reason; being not so properly a *dissolution* of a marriage, as a declaration that it was *void from the beginning*, and never took place.

Some writers of moral philosophy add, as *causes of divorce, contrariety of temper, incurable diseases*, and such as would *infect the offspring*. But *none* of them seem of sufficient moment. The first would be an evident temptation to *causeless and wanton separations*—and all the three may be guarded against by *previous caution*.

Hutchinson observes that in all nations, marrying in *near degrees of consanguinity or affinity*, has been *avoided and abhorred*; and he adds, that the natural and general abhorrence of it has been greater than *reason* seems to dictate. Hence it has been conjectured to have been *early tradition or revelation*—and

men have exercised their invention in finding out the true *reason* or *ground* of the prohibition.

One reason assigned is, because if marriage were lawful to *near relations*, their frequent intercourse would be a strong temptation to *uncleanliness*.

Another; that if permitted, it would frequently *confound* or *invert* the duties of *relations*, by setting some *above* others whom they formerly used to *obey*.

A third reason, and perhaps the *best* is, that abstaining from blood relations in this voluntary contract, *extends the social ties*, and produces a greater number of family relations.

Whatever be the *moral reasons*, it seems to have a strong *sanction in nature*; for it is observed that marriage between near relations, especially if repeated, greatly *weakens the human race*.

As to the *extent* of this prohibition, it has been various in different nations, but the most prevailing has been to forbid all within *three degrees*. The degrees are reckoned by the *steps of descent* between the *parties* and the *common parent*. *Parent and child* is the first—*child and child* the second—*child and grand-child* the third—and *two grand-children* or first cousins the fourth—when it becomes *lawful*.

## RELATION OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

The first thing to be observed is, that this relation is distinguished by the *strongest instinct* of parental affection. This seems *necessary*, as the education of children is a duty requiring so much *time, care and expence*, which nothing but the most *rooted affection* would submit to.

The *rights* of the parent may be summed up in these two: 1. *Authority*, which requires *subjection* in the children. 2. A right to a *grateful return* in due time from the children. The first is a *perfect right*, as far as it extends, but must be limited.

Some nations have given parents the power of *life and death* over their children; and Hobbes insists, that children are the *goods and absolute property* of their parents, and that they may *alienate* them and sell them either for *a time* or for *life*. But both these seem ill founded, because they are contrary to the *end* of this right, viz. *instruction and protection*. Parental right seems in most cases to be limited by the *advantage of the children*.

Children are no doubt to judge for themselves in matters of religion when they come to *years*; though the parents are under the strongest obligation to *instruct* them carefully to the best of their judgment. Those who insist, that to leave them their judgment *free* they ought not to be taught *any principles*, ought to



consider that their scheme is *impracticable* and *absurd*. If the parents do not instruct them, they will imbibe *prejudices* and contract *habits*, perhaps of the worst kind, from others.

Children in most nations are considered as having a right, exclusive of their parents, to *property given them by others*.

Many nations have given the parents a right to dispose of their children in *marriage*; but this seems to be carrying parental authority *too far*, if it be made *absolute*, because it puts in the power of the parent to dispose of what is most essential to their *happiness*, through the whole of their future life. Yet it seems very contrary to reason and nature, that children *in early life* should dispose of themselves in marriage without *consulting* their parents.

Since we have denied the power of life and death to parents, it will be asked, what is the *sanction* of their authority? I answer, *moderate correction in early life*, and, as the very highest punishment *expulsion from their family*, or a forfeiture of the privileges which they despise.

As to the right to a *grateful return*, it is an imperfect right, but of the *strongest kind*—sometimes the civil authority interposes, and obliges children to maintain their aged parents.

To the *disgrace of human nature* it is often observed, that *parental affection* is much stronger than *filial duty*. We must indeed

acknowledge the *wisdom of Providence*, in making the instinctive impulse stronger in parents towards their children, than in children towards their parents; because the first is more necessary than the other to the *public good*; yet when we consider both as improved into a *virtuous disposition*, by reason and a sense of duty, there seems to be every whit as much baseness in *filial ingratitude*, as in want of *natural affection*.

#### RELATION OF MASTER AND SERVANT.

This relation is first generated by the *difference* which God hath permitted to take place *between man and man*. Some are superior to others in *mental powers* and *intellectual improvement*—some by the great increase of their *property* through their own, or their predecessors' *industry*, and some make it their *choice*, finding they cannot live otherwise better, to let out their labour to others for hire.

Let us shortly consider, 1. How *far* this subjection extends. 2. The *duties* on each side.

As to the first, it seems to be only that the master has a right to the *labours* and *ingenuity* of the servant, for a *limited time*, or at most for *life*. He can have no right either to *take away* life, or to make it *insupportable* by excessive labour. The servant therefore *retains* all his other natural rights.

The practice of ancient nations, of making their *prisoners of war slaves*, was altogether *unjust and barbarous*; for though we could suppose that those who were the *causes* of an unjust war deserved to be made slaves; yet this could not be the case of *all who fought on their side*; besides, the doing so in *one* instance, would authorise the doing it in any *other*; and those who fought in defence of their *country*, when unjustly invaded, might be taken as well as others. The practice was also *impolitic*, as slaves never are so good or faithful servants, as those who become so for a limited time, by consent.

## LECTURE XII.



## OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

**CIVIL SOCIETY**, as distinguished from domestic, is the *union of a number of families in one state, for their mutual benefit.*

We have before affirmed, that society always supposes an expressed or implied contract or agreement. Let us now see what this agreement necessarily implies.

1. The *consent* of every individual to live in, and be a member of that society. 2. A consent to some particular *plan of government.* 3. *A mutual agreement* between the subjects and rulers; of *subjection* on the one hand, of *protection* on the other—These are all implied in the union of every society, and they complete the whole.

Any objections that may be raised against this, are easily solved, e. g.—Though *every individual* has not given an *actual consent*, yet his determination to live with any society *implies it.* Again, if it be asked how *children* come to be members of a society; it is answered, they receive the *benefits* and partake of the *rights* of the society during the whole time of their *education*, and as they come to the use of reason, they both claim

the *privilege* and *acquiesce* in the duty of citizens—And if they find any thing *insupportable* in their condition, they may *alter* it at their pleasure.

Have then all subjects *a right*, when they see *fit*, to *remove* from the society in which they are? I answer, that in all *ordinary* cases they ought to have, at least in time of *peace*. Perhaps it may be affirmed with justice, that they who have enjoyed the privileges of any society in time of peace, if *war* or *danger* to the public should arise, they may be hindered from emigrating *at that time*; and compelled to contribute their *share* in what is necessary to the common defence.

Whatever is the form of government in any society, the members may be divided into two classes, the *rulers* and the *ruled*, the *magistrates* and *subjects*.

The rights of *rulers* may be divided into *essential* and *accidental*: the essential, such as in general *must* be vested in rulers of every society; the accidental, such as *may* be given to the rulers in *some* societies, but not in others.

The *essential* rights of rulers are what require most to be enumerated; and these again by some good writers are divided into *greater* and *lesser essentials*.

Of the first kind are, 1. *Legislation*. 2. *Taxation*, for the public expence. 3. *Jurisdiction*, or the administration of justice. 4. *Representation*, or appearing and acting in

the *name of the whole*, in all transactions, with adjacent *independent states*, chiefly for the purposes of making *war or peace*.

The *less essential* rights of rulers are many; and they are called *less essential*, because they may be more *varied* than the others; such as *coining of money*—*possessing or managing public edifices*—*conferring honours on officers*, &c.

The *rights of subjects* in a social state cannot be *enumerated*, but they may be all summed up in *protection*, that is to say, those who have surrendered part of their natural rights expect the strength of the public arm to defend and improve what remains.

It has been often said, that government is carried on by *rewards and punishments*; but it ought to be observed, that the *only reward* that a state can be supposed to bestow upon good subjects in general, is *protection and defence*. Some few, who have *distinguished* themselves in the public service, may be distinguished by *particular* rewards; but to reward the *whole* is *impossible*, because the reward must be *levied* from those very persons to whom it is to be *given*.

After what has been said on the foundation of society, viz. *consent*, perhaps it may be necessary to mention *two exceptions*.

1. It is said by some with apparent reason, that *a few persons*, if accidentally armed with power, may constrain *a large ignorant rabble* to submit to laws which will be for their

*good*. This I would admit in *some cases*, when there is an evident *madness and disorder* in the multitude, and when there is a *moral certainty* that they will afterwards be *pleased* with the violence done them. But in *general* it is but a bad maxim, that we may *force* people for their *good*. All lovers of power will be disposed to think that even a violent use of it is for the public good.

2. Though people have actually consented to any form of government, if they have been *essentially deceived* in the nature and operation of the laws, if they are found to be *pernicious* and destructive of the ends of the union, they may certainly *break up* the society, *recol* their obligation, and *resettle* the whole upon a better footing.

#### OF THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF GOVERNMENT.

As soon as men began to consider and compare forms of government, they divided them into *three general and simple kinds*, 1. *monarchy*, 2. *aristocracy*, 3. *democracy*. These are called *simple*, because they are clearly *distinguishable* from each other in their *nature and effects*. The ancients generally divided the forms of government in this manner, because most of their governments were of *one or other of these kinds*, with very little mixture.

*Monarchy* is when the supreme power is vested in a *single person*. Mr. Hutchinson

says, monarchy may be either *absolute* or *limited*; but this is an inaccuracy, for limited monarchy is one of the *mixed* kinds of governments.

But monarchy may be either *temporary* or for *life*. The Roman dictators were absolute for a time; and so long as they continued, the government was purely monarchical, all other powers being dormant.

Monarchy may also be either *hereditary* or *elective*.

*Aristocracy* is that form of government, in which the supreme power is lodged with a *small number of nobles*. This is capable of the *same variations* as monarchy, and it may be either temporary or perpetual, hereditary or elective, with this difference, that a *temporary* or *elective* aristocracy always puts some power in the hands of *the people*. The most complete aristocracy is when the ruling party have the power of *cooptation* within themselves, and can fill up as they please, the vacancies made by deaths or resignations.

*Democracy* is when the supreme power is left in the *multitude*. But as in large governments the people in a *collective body* cannot well *meet* together, nor could they transact business with any convenience if they did, they may meet by *representatives*, chosen either by the *whole*, or by *particular districts*.

From those *simple* forms are generated



many *complex* forms; *two* of them may be compounded together, either in *equal* or in *different* proportions, or *all* these may be united, as in the British government.

After pointing out the simple forms of government, it will be proper to make some *general observations* upon government, and apply them to the various forms, to show whether any of them is *preferable* to the other, and the *advantages* and *defects* of each in particular.

1. There are *four* things that seem to be *requisite* in a system of government, and every form is *good* in *proportion* as it possesses or attains them. 1. *Wisdom* to plan proper measures for the public good. 2. *Fidelity* to have nothing but the public interest in view. 3. *Secrecy, expedition* and *dispatch*, in carrying measures into execution; and, 4. *Unity* and *concord*, so that one branch of the government may not impede, or be a hindrance to another.

*Monarchy* has plainly the advantage in *unity, secrecy, and expedition*. *Many* cannot so easily nor so speedily agree upon proper measures, nor can they expect to keep their designs secret; therefore, say some, if *a man* could be found *wise* enough, and *just* enough for the charge, monarchy would be the *best* form of government. Accordingly we find in the command of *a ship, fleet* or *army*, *one* person is commonly intrusted with supreme power; but this does not apply to

*states*, for many reasons. *No man* can be found, who has either *skill* sufficient, or, if he had, could *give attention* to the whole departments of a great empire. Besides, in *hereditary monarchies* there is no *security* at all for either *wisdom* or *goodness*; and an *elective* monarchy, though it may seem to promise *ability*, has been always found in *experience*, worse than the other; because there is no reason to expect that an elected monarch will have the *public good* at heart; he will probably mind only *private* or *family* interest.

*Aristocracy* has the advantage of all the others for *wisdom* in deliberations; that is to say, a number of persons of the *first rank* must be supposed by their consultations to be able to discover the public interest. But it has very *little* or *no prospect* of *fidelity* or *union*. The most ambitious projects, and the most violent and implacable factions, often prevail in such states.

*Democracy* has the advantage of both the others for *fidelity*; the multitude collectively always are *true* in *intention* to the interest of the public, because it is their *own*. They are the *public*. But at the same time it has very little advantage for *wisdom*, or *union*, and none at all for *secrecy* and *expedition*. Besides, the multitude are exceeding apt to be *deceived* by *demagogues* and ambitious persons. They are very apt to trust a man

who *serves them well* with such power, as that he is able to make them *serve him*.

If the true notion of liberty is the *prevalence of law and order*, and the *security of individuals*, none of the simple forms are *favourable* to it.

*Monarchy*, every one knows, is but another name for *tyranny*, where the arbitrary will of one capricious man disposes of the lives and properties of all ranks.

*Aristocracy* always makes *vassals* of the *inferior ranks*, who have no hand in government, and the great commonly rule with greater severity than absolute monarchs. A monarch is at such a *distance* from most of his subjects, that he does them little injury; but the lord of a *petty seignory* is a rigorous *task-master* to his unhappy dependants. The *jealousy* with which the members of an aristocratical state defend their *own* privileges, is no security at all for humanity and easy treatment to their *inferiors*. Example—the *Spartans*; their treatment of the *Helots*—and the *barons* in all the feudal governments, in their treatment of their *vassals*.

*Pure democracy* cannot *subsist long*, nor be carried far into the departments of state—it is very subject to *caprice* and the madness of popular rage. They are also very apt to choose a *favourite*, and vest him with such *power* as *overthrows their own liberty*;—examples, *Athens and Rome*.

Hence it appears that *every good form of*

government, must be *complex*, so that the one principle may check the other. It is of consequence to have as much *virtue* among the particular members of a community as possible; but it is *folly* to expect that a state should be upheld by *integrity* in all who have a share in managing it. They must be so *balanced*, that when every one *draws* to his own interest or inclination, there may be an *equipoise* upon the whole.

II. The *second observation* upon the forms of government is, that where there is a *balance* of different bodies, as in all *mixed* forms, there must be always some *nexus imperii*, something to make one of them *necessary* to the other. If this is not the case, they will not only draw *different* ways, but will often *separate altogether* from each other. In order to produce this *nexus*, some of the *great essential rights of rulers* must be *divided* and distributed among the *different* branches of the legislature. Example--in the British government, the *king* has the power of *making war and peace*,--but the *parliament* have the levying and distribution of *money*, which is a sufficient restraint.

III. The *third observation* is, that the *ruling part* of any state must always have *considerable property*, chiefly of *lands*. The reason is, *property* has such an *invariable influence*, that whoever possesses *property* must have *power*. *Property* in a state is also some security for *fidelity*, because

interest then is concerned in the public welfare.

For this reason, did men in *every state* live entirely by *agriculture*, an *agrarian law* would be necessary to *liberty*; because if a vast proportion of property came into a *few hands*, they would soon take all *power* to themselves. But *trade* and *commerce* supersede the *necessity* of this, because the *great* and *sudden fortunes* accumulated by trade, cause a *rotation* of property.

IV. In a well formed state the *subjects* should not be too *numerous*, nor too *few*. If very numerous, the principles of government cannot exert their *force* over the *whole*. The Roman empire *fell* by its *own weight*. If the subjects are too *few*, they are not sufficient to suppress internal *insurrections*, or repel attacks from *without*.

V. It is frequently observed, that in every government there is a *supreme irresistible power* lodged *somewhere* in *king*, *senate*, or *people*. To this power is the *final appeal* in all questions. *Beyond* this we cannot go. How *far* does this authority extend? We answer, as far as authority in a social state *can extend*; it is not *accountable* to any *other tribunal*, and it is supposed in the social compact that we have *agreed to submit* to its decision. There is however an *exception*, if the supreme power, wherever lodged, come to be exercised in a manifestly *tyrannical manner*, the subjects may certainly, if in their

power, *resist and overthrow it*. But this is only when it becomes *manifestly* more advantageous to *unsettle* the government *altogether*, than to *submit to tyranny*. This resistance to the supreme power, however, is *subverting* the society *altogether*, and is not to be attempted till the government is so corrupt, as that *anarchy* and the uncertainty of a new settlement is *preferable* to the *continuance* as it is.

This doctrine of *resistance* even to the supreme power is *essentially connected* with what has been said on the social contract, and the consent necessary to political union. If it be asked, *who must judge* when the government may be resisted? I answer, *the subjects in general*, every one for himself. This may seem to be making them both *judge and party*, but there is *no remedy*. It would be *denying* the privilege altogether, to make the *oppressive ruler* the judge.

It is easy to see that the meaning of this is not that any *little mistake* of the rulers of any society will justify resistance. We must obey and submit to them *always*, till the corruption becomes *intolerable*; for to say that we must resist legal authority every time *we judged* it to be wrong, would be inconsistent with a *state of society*, and to the very first idea of subjection.

The once famous controversy on *passive obedience and non-resistance* seems now in

our country to be pretty much over; what the advocates for *submission* used to say was, that to teach the lawfulness of *resisting a government* in any instance, and to make *the rebel the judge*, is subversive of all order, and must subject a state to perpetual *sedition*; to which I answer, to *refuse this inherent right* in every man, is to *establish injustice and tyranny*, and leave every good subject without help, as a tame prey to the ambition and rapacity of others. No doubt men may *abuse* the privilege, yet this does not make it *void*. Besides, it is not till a *whole people* rise, that resistance has any effect, and it is not easy to suppose that a whole people *would* rise against their governors, unless when they have really received *very great provocation*. Whereas, on the other hand, nothing is more natural than for *rulers* to *grasp at power*, and their situation enables them to do it successfully, by *slow and insensible encroachments*. In *experience* there are *many* instances of rulers becoming *tyrants*, but, comparatively, *very few* of causeless and premature *rebellions*. There are occasional and partial insurrections in every government. These are easily raised by interested persons, but the great majority continues to support order.

VI. *Dominion*, it is plain from all that has been said, can be acquired justly only *one way*, viz. by *consent*. There are *two* other ways commonly mentioned, both of which

are *defective, inheritance and conquest. Hereditary power*, which originally rose from *consent*, and is supposed to be founded upon the continuance of consent, (as that of the hereditary power in a limited monarchy) is as *lawful as any*; but when they pretend such a right from *nature* is independent of the *people*, it is *absurd*.

That which is called the *right of conquest* ought to be *exploded* altogether. We shall see by and by, what is the right of a conqueror in a just war. It was his right *before*, and he obtains *possession* of it by conquest. But to found any claim merely on conquest is not a *right*, but *robbery*.

Upon the whole, I will conclude with a few remarks upon the *spirit and tendency of different forms of government*.

1. *Monarchical government* has a tendency to *politeness and elegance of manners*, and generally to *luxury*. The *submission and obsequiousness* practised at the court of a monarch diffuses itself through the whole state.

2. *Aristocracy* narrows the mind *exceedingly*, and indeed cannot long subsist in a *large state*. A *small aristocracy*, however, may subsist as a form of government, as *long* as any other method, or longer.

3. *Democracy* tends to *plainness and freedom of speech*, and sometimes to a *savage and indecent ferocity*. Democracy is the *nurse of eloquence*, because when the multi-



tude have the power, *persuasion* is the only way to govern them.

Let us now ask this short question, *what is the value and advantage of civil liberty?*

Is it necessary to *virtue*? This cannot be supposed. A virtuous mind and virtuous conduct is *possible*, and perhaps *equally possible* in every form of government.

Is it necessary to *personal private happiness*? It may seem so. We see the subjects of arbitrary governments however not only *happy*, but very often they have a *greater attachment* to their form of government than those of free states have to their's. And if *contentment* be necessary to happiness, there is commonly more *impatience and discontent* in a *free state* than in any other. The tyranny even of an absolute monarch does not effect with personal injury any of his subjects but *a few*, and chiefly those who make it their choice to be *near* him. Perhaps in free governments the *law* and *the mob* do more mischief to *private property*, than is done in any absolute monarchy.

*What* then is the *advantage* of civil liberty? I suppose it *chiefly* consists in its *tendency to put in motion all the human powers*. Therefore, it promotes *industry*, and in this respect *happiness*,—produces every *latent quality*, and *improves* the human mind. —*Liberty* is the *nurse* of *riches*, *literature* and *heroism*.

## LECTURE XIII.



## OF THE LAW OF NATURE AND NATIONS.

THE next thing in order, is to treat of what is called the law of *nature and nations*. It has been before observed, that separate and independent states are, with regard to *one another*, in a state of *natural liberty*, or as *man to man* before the commencement of civil society. On this several questions arise. 1. Is there any *such law*? 2. *What is the law*? 3. What is its *sanction*, or how is it to be enforced?

That there is *such a law* is plain, from the reasons that show the obligation which one man lies under to another. If there are natural rights of *men*, there are natural rights of *nations*. *Bodies politic*, in this view, do not differ, in the least from *individuals*. Therefore, as before, *reason, conscience* and *common utility*, show that there is a *law of nature and nations*.

The question *what it is*? must be considered in the same manner. I am not able to recollect any *perfect or imperfect right* that can belong to *one man*, as distinguished from

*another*, but what belongs to *nations*; save that there is usually less occasion for the imperfect rights. If we read over the *perfect rights*, in a state of natural liberty, (page 87) we shall see *they all apply to nations*.

It will also appear that the *imperfect rights* apply; but the *occasions* of exerting them are much more *rare*. For example, it is more rare to see a nation in a state of *general indigence*, so as to require a supply. Yet this *sometimes* happens. It did so in the case of *Portugal*, at the time of the great *earthquake* at Lisbon. And the other nations of Europe lent them assistance. It is also from this principle that *ships* of different nations *meeting at sea*, will do acts of humanity to one another. Sometimes also there are *national favours* that deserve *national gratitude*. But this is *seldom merited*, and, I believe, still *seldomer paid*.

As to the *sanction* of the law of nature and nations, it is no other than *a general sense of duty*, and such a sense of common utility, as makes men fear that if they *notoriously break these laws*, *reproach* and *infamy* among all nations will be the effect, and probably *resentment* and *indignation* by common consent.

The violation of the natural rights of mankind being a transgression of the law of nature, and between nations as in a state of natural liberty, there being no method of redress but *force*, the law of nature and na-

tions has, as its chief or only object the manner of making *war and peace*.

In war it is proper to consider distinctly, 1. The *causes* for which a *just war* may be carried on. 2. The *time of commencing*. 3. The *duration*. 4. The *means* by which it may be carried on.

As to the first, the *causes of commencing war* are according to the principles above laid down, *the violation of any perfect right*—as taking away the *property* of the other state, or the *lives* of its subjects, or *restraining* them in their industry, or *hindering* them in the use of things common, &c. There is only *one* perfect right, the violation of which does *not* seem to be the cause of war; I mean that by which we have a right to *character*. *National calumny* is scarcely a cause of war, because it cannot be *frequent* or of *great effect*. The violation of imperfect rights cannot *usually* be a cause of war between nations; yet a case may be *supposed*, in which even these would be a *just cause of war*. Suppose a ship of any nation should go into a port of another, in the greatest distress, and not only the *people in general*, but the *governing part* of the society, should deny them *all assistance*—This would be an act of such notorious *inhumanity*, and of such *evil example*, that it may justify national resentment; and yet even here, I think there should first be a *demand of justice* upon the

*offending persons*, before vengeance should be taken upon the state.

These are the just and legitimate causes of making war. Some add to them, that when a nation is seen to put itself in *such a situation as to defence*, or as to the means of *annoying others*, that it seems to *threaten* hostilities, then we are not obliged to wait till it hath committed *actual injury*, but may put it in a state of *incapacity*: but there is no other truth in this, but what is founded upon the other; for the preservation of our property implies, that if others take such measures as *are not to be accounted for* but upon the supposition of an *intention* of wronging me, it is often easier and safer to *prevent* and *disarm the robber*, than to suffer him to *commit the violence*, and then to *strip him* and *rob him of his prey*.

One thing more is to be added, that *every nation has a right to join which it pleases of two contending parties*. This is easily resolved into the general principles; for the injured party may be supposed to go to war in defence of some perfect right; and the cause being *just*, the imperfect right of *humanity*, as well as general and common *utility*, calls for *assistance* to the oppressed. So that if we have a right to *associate* with any nation, we may be entitled to *protect their property and rights*.

2. As to the *time of commencing war*, it seems to be no way contrary to natural law

to say it is *at any time the injured party pleases, after having received an injury*; but *accident* or *utility*, or a desire in each party to manifest the *equity* of their cause, has introduced *universally* the custom of *declaring war*. This began *very early*, and though not of *absolute right*, having been generally introduced, must be *continued*, though there is often more of *form* than of *substance* in it; for nations do often begin both *attack* and *defence* before declaration; as well as make all the necessary preparations for striking the most effectual blow. The *meaning* of a declaration of war seems to be, to call upon the injuring party to *prevent it by reparation*—Likewise to *manifest* to all other states the *justice* of the cause.

3. *The duration of a war* should be, according to natural equity, *till the injury be completely redressed*, and reasonable *security* given against *future attacks*: therefore the practice, too common, of continuing a war for the acquisition of empire, is to be condemned. Because one state has done *some injury* to another, it seems quite unreasonable that they should not only repair the injury, but *subvert* and *ruin* the offending state altogether—this would be unreasonable between man and man, if one had wronged another, not only to *repair* the wrong, but to take *all the rest that he had*, and reduce his family to beggary. It is even *more* unreasonable in *states*, because the offenders in

states are not to be supposed to be *the whole people*, but only the *rulers*, or perhaps only *some individuals*.

Perhaps it may be asked, what is *reasonable security* against future injury? I answer, between equal independent nations, *solemn treaties* ought to be considered as security, but if faith has been often broken, perhaps something *more* may be required. The mutual complaints of nations against each other for breach of faith makes conquerors often demand such a *degree of security*, as puts the conquered *altogether in their power*.

4. As to *the legitimate means* of carrying on the war, in general, it may be said in one word, *by force or open violence*. It is admitted on all hands, that this force may be used against the person and goods, not only of the *rulers*, but of *every member* of the hostile state. This may seem *hard*, that *innocent subjects* of the state should suffer for the folly and indiscretion of the *rulers*, or of *other members* of the same state; but it is *unavoidable*. The whole individuals that compose a state are considered but as *one body*; it would be impossible for an enemy to *distinguish* the *guilty* from the *innocent*; and when men submit to a government, they *risk* their own possessions on the same bottom with the whole, in return for the benefits of society.

Open violence may be said to have *no bounds*; and therefore *every method* that can

be invented, and the most *deadly weapons* of annoyance may *seem* to be permitted—But from what has been said above, and upon the principles of *general equity*, all acts of *cruelty* and *inhumanity* are to be *blamed*,—and all *severity*, that has not an immediate effect in *weakening the national strength* of the enemy, is certainly inhumanity—Such as *killing prisoners* whom you can *keep* safely—*killing women and children*—*burning and destroying* every thing that could be of use in life.

The use of *poisoned weapons* has been also generally condemned—the poisoning of *springs* or *provisions*.

To the honour of *modern times*, and very probably, I think, to the honour of *christianity*, there is *now* much more humanity in the way of carrying on war than *formerly*.

To aim particularly at *the life of a leader* or person of chief note seems to have nothing in it *unjust* or *improper*, because the more *important* the life, it does more toward the *finishing* of the war; but what many seem to admit, the *bribing* of his *own people* to *assassinate him privately*, I cannot think *honourable* or *fair*.

A question is often moved in morals, *how far it is lawful to deceive an enemy?* especially if we hold the general and universal obligation of truth. To this it may be answered, in the first place, that we may certainly with great justice *conceal our own de-*



*signs* from an enemy--as indeed we may generally from friends, by silence, and guarding against every circumstance that may betray them. Neither do I think there is any thing at all blame-worthy in a general of an army using *ambiguous signs*, as feigned marches of a part or the whole, putting up *lights* or such things, because after a declaration of war he does not pretend to *give information* to his enemy of his motions, nay it is expected on both sides that they will do the best they can to *over-reach* one another in point of prudence. Yet I can scarce think it right to employ people to go to the enemy, and professing to be *sincere*, tell *direct falsehoods*, and deceive them by that false intelligence.

It is the custom of all to send *spies* to discover the enemy's designs, and also to *bribe* some of the enemies themselves to discover the designs of their leaders--The *last* of which is, I think, at least of a *doubtful nature*, or rather *unjust*--Though sending spies is by *all* approved, yet (what may seem a little unaccountable) such spies are always punished with *instant death* by the opposite side when detected. The *reason* probably is, that *pretending friendship* they have a right to consider them as *traitors*--Or as they are in an act of *hostility*, they kill them,] as they would do an enemy in *battle*, when in their power.

These circumstances apply to *all war* in

general : but there is a distinction of wars by civilians into two kinds, *solemn and civil*. The first includes all wars between states formerly *independent*, the other *internal insurrections* of a part of one government against another.

There has generally been a great difference in the behaviour of the opposite parties in these different wars. In *solemn wars* there is a presumption of *integrity in the plurality on both sides*, each believes his own cause to be just. On this account they are to be treated with the more humanity. In *civil wars* the insurgents are considered as making *unjust resistance* to the ruling part of the society, and therefore guilty of the greatest crimes against society. Therefore they are often treated with great *rigour*, and when taken in battle, reserved to *solemn trial and public execution*. There is some reason for this in many cases, when it is indeed an *unreasonable or unprovoked insurrection* of disorderly citizens ; but there are many cases in which the pretences on both sides are so *plausible*, that the war should be in all respects considered as *solemn*.

It should be observed, notwithstanding the hostile disposition, there are occasions, both *in a treaty for peace* and during *the continuance of the war*, when enemies are under the strongest obligations to *sincerity* in their behaviour to each other. — When proposals are made for accommodating the differences, for a

suspension of arms, for an exchange of prisoners, or any thing similar.

It is worth while to inquire, whether the greatest *honour* and *candour* in war, with a strict adherence to all the laws above laid down, would give any party a *great advantage*, who should take the liberty of *transgressing* them—as for example, who should use poisoned weapons—should send people to tell false stories—should bribe subjects to assassinate a hostile prince—I answer, that they would have *no advantage at all*, but probably *the contrary*. There is something *powerful* in *magnanimity*, which subdues the hearts of enemies; nay, sometimes *terrifies* them, and particularly inspires a general's army with invincible courage. Besides these, sinister arts are not so terrible as may be imagined—telling false news is as easily discovered as any trick whatsoever.

*Prudence* and *integrity* have no need of any assistance from *fraud*—acts even of *generosity*, from enemy to enemy, are often as useful as any acts of hostility. There was something very handsome in the Roman general, who refused to avail himself of the treachery of a school-master, as well as whimsical, in the way in which he punished the traitor.

#### OF MAKING PEACE.

As already hinted, all proposals tending to this purpose ought to be made with *the*

*utmost sincerity.* Of all deceits in war, the most infamous is that of making a treaty, or seeking a conference, only to take advantage of the security of one party to destroy him—by assassination, or by breaking a truce, to fight with advantage.

The *terms* of peace ought to be agreeable to the end of making war. *Damages should be repaired, and security given against future injury.*

We have often said that nation to nation is as man to man, in a state of natural liberty; therefore *treaties of peace* between nations, should in general, proceed upon the same principles as *private contracts* between man and man. There is however, an *exception*, that contracts between individuals are (at least by law) always void, when they are the effect of *constraint* upon one side. Now this must not hold in treaties between nations, because it would always furnish a *pretext* for breaking them. On the side of the conquered, a treaty is always in a great degree, the effect of *necessity*,

It is generally, however, laid down in most authors as a principle, that the terms *imposed* and *submitted* to, may be sometimes so *rigorous* and *oppressive*, as to justify the injured party in revolting when they are *able*. This seems to me to be very *lax* in point of morals. It would be better I think, to say, that the people who *made* the treaty should not *recede* from it. Their *posterity*, how-

ever, at some distance, cannot be supposed bound to *unjust servitude* by the deeds of their fathers.

Let us conclude this subject by a few remarks on the situation of *neutral states*.

1. Every state has a right, when others are contending, to *remain neuter*, and assist neither party.

2. They have a right to all their *former privileges* with both the contending parties—may carry on their traffic with both, and may show all the usual marks of friendship to both—only it has been generally agreed upon, that they are not to trade with any of them in *certain articles* supposed to be of consequence in *carrying on war*, particularly *provisions* and *arms*.

3. Neutral powers should keep their *harbours alike open to both* for common refreshment, and as an asylum to fly to. And it is held necessary, that the contending powers must not carry on their quarrel, nor exercise any hostilities, *within the territories of a neutral state*.

4. Neutral states may purchase *moveable goods* from any of the contending parties, which have been taken from the other. But not so with respect to *lands* or *forts*, because if the other party are able, they will re-take their possessions.

5. Deeds of a *violent possessor* are held to be valid, that is to say, if a conqueror prevails for a *time*, and levies *tribute* from any coun-

try, and *afterwards* the rightful possessor prevails, it would be unjust to demand the tribute *again*, because the true owner was not able to give *protection* to the subjects, and what was paid was lost through *his weakness*. The same thing may be said of a dependent state; if it owes any money and service to a supreme state, and an enemy *exact it by force*, the proper creditor cannot justly demand it *again*.

On the whole, those things that have been generally received as the law of nature and nations, are founded on the principles of *equity*, and, when well observed, do greatly promote *general utility*.

## LECTURE XIV.

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### JURISPRUDENCE.

**JURISPRUDENCE** is the method of enacting and administering civil laws in any constitution.

We cannot propose to go through a system of civil laws, and therefore what I have in view is to make some preliminary remarks, and then to point out the object of civil laws, and the manner of their operation.

1. The first preliminary remark is, that a constitution is excellent, when the spirit of the civil laws is such as to have a tendency to prevent offences and make men good, as much as to punish them when they do evil.

This is necessary in some measure; for when the general disposition of a people is against the laws, they cannot long subsist, even by a strict and rigorous execution on the part of the rulers. There is, however, more of this in some constitutions than in others. Solon and Xenophon, as well as Lycurgus, seem to have formed their plan very much with this view, to direct the manners of the people in the first place, which will always make the observation of particular laws easy.

But how shall the magistrate manage this matter, or what can be done *by law* to make the people of any state virtuous? If, as we have seen above, virtue and piety are inseparably connected, then to promote *true religion* is the best, and most effectual way, of making a virtuous and regular people. Love to God, and love to man, is the substance of religion; when these *prevail*, civil laws will have little to do.

But this leads to a very important disquisition, *how far* the magistrate ought to *interfere* in matters of religion. Religious sentiments are very various—and we have given it as one of the perfect rights in natural liberty, and which ought not to be alienated even in society, that every one should *judge for himself* in matters of religion.

What the magistrate may do on this subject seems to be confined to the three following particulars.

1. The magistrate (or ruling part of any society) ought to *encourage piety by his own example*, and by endeavouring to make it an object of *public esteem*. Whenever the general opinion is in favour of any thing, it will have many followers. Magistrates may promote and encourage men of piety and virtue, and they may *discountenance* those whom it would be improper to *punish*.

2. The magistrate ought to *defend the rights of conscience*, and *tolerate* all in their religious sentiments that are not injurious to



their neighbours. In the ancient heathen states there was less occasion for this, because in the system of polytheism, the different gods and rites were not supposed to be opposite, but co-ordinate and consistent; but when there is believed to be but one God, the sentiments about his nature and worship will often be considered as essentially repugnant one to another.

The pretence of infidels, that *persecution* only belongs to the *Christian* religion, is absurd; for the *Christian* was the *first* religion that was persecuted, and it was the necessary consequence of saying, that the gods of the heathens were *no gods*.

At present, as things are situated, one of the most important duties of the magistracy is to *protect the rights of conscience*.

It is commonly said, however, that in case any sect holds tenets *subversive* of society and inconsistent with the rights of others, that they ought *not* to be tolerated. On this footing Popery is not tolerated in Great Britain; because they profess entire subjection to a foreign power, the See of Rome; and therefore must be in opposition to the proper interest of their own state; and because violence or persecution for religion is a *part of their religion*, which makes their prosperity threaten ruin to others—as well as the principle *imputed* to them, which they *deny*, that faith is not to be kept with heretics. But however just this may be in a way of *reasoning*,

we ought in general, to guard against persecution on a religious account, as much as possible; because such as hold *absurd* tenets are seldom *dangerous*. Perhaps they are never dangerous, but when they are *oppressed*. Papists are tolerated in Holland without danger to liberty. And though not properly *tolerated*, they are now *connived at* in Britain.

In ancient times, in great states, the *Censorial* power was found necessary to their continuance, which inspected the *manners* of men. It seems probable, that *supporting the religious sects* in modern times answers *this end*, for the particular discipline of each sect is intended for the correction of manners.

3. The magistrate may enact laws for the punishment of acts of *profanity* and *impiety*. The different sentiments of men in religion, ought not by any means to encourage or give a sanction to such acts as any of them count *profane*.

Many are of opinion, that besides all this, the magistrate ought to make *public provision* for the worship of God, in such manner as is agreeable to the great body of the society; though at the same time, all who *dissent* from it are fully tolerated. And indeed, there seems to be a good deal of reason for it, that so instruction may be provided for the *bulk of common people*, who would, many of them, neither support nor employ teachers, unless they were obliged. The magistrate's right,

in this case, seems to be something like that of the parent, they have a right to *instruct*, but not to *constrain*.

II. The second preliminary remark is, that laws should be so framed as to promote such *principles in general*, as are favourable to *good government*, and particularly *that principle*, if there be one, that gave *rise* to the constitution, and is congenial to it.

Such a principle as I have in view, is generally the *point of honour* in a country, and this law-givers and administrators of law should endeavour to preserve in its *full vigour*, for whenever it is undermined, the constitution goes to *ruin*.

Of these principles, *sobriety*, *industry*, and *public spirit* are the chief. Some states are formed to subsist by *sobriety* and *parsimony*, as the Lacedaemonians.

*Industry* is the prevailing principle in others, as in Holland. *Public spirit* in others, as in Greece, ancient Rome, and Britain. Only public spirit may be *diversified*; sometimes it is a passion for acquiring *glory* and *dominion*, as in Rome, and sometimes for *preserving liberty*, as in Greece and Britain.

When I say, that in the management of a state the utmost attention should be given to *the principle of the constitution*, to preserve it in its vigour, I mean that though all *other* crimes are *bad*, and in part tend to the ruin of a state, yet this is *much more* the case with

crimes against *that* principle than any *other*. Any act of *immorality* was *bad* at Sparta, but to make *poverty* and *parsimony* *reproachful*, and to introduce fine houses and furniture, and delicate entertainments, would have been *instant ruin*.

Any act of immorality would be hurtful in Holland, but to make *fraudulent bankruptcy* less *infamous* than it is, would immediately *destroy* them.

*Sobriety*, *industry*, and *public spirit*, are nearly *allied*, and have a *reciprocal influence* upon one another. Yet there may be a great degree of *some* of them, in the absence of the *others*. In Sparta, there was *much* sobriety and public spirit, but *little* industry. In Athens, *much* industry and public spirit, with very little parsimony.

In opposition to the whole of this, Mandeville wrote a book, called *The Fable of the Bees*, which seems to be levelled against sobriety, industry, and public spirit, all at once; his position is, *that private vices are public benefits*, and that the *waste* and *luxury* of one man, supplies the *wants* of another; but it is easy to overthrow his reasoning, for though sober and industrious persons *spend* each less than a profuse person, yet *sobriety* and *industry* tend much more to *population*, and by that means they are mutually serviceable to each other. *Luxury* and *vice* only *waste* and *destroy*, they *add nothing* to the common stock of property or of happiness.

*Experience* fully justifies this, for though from the luxury of *one man* another may reap some *gain*, the luxury of a *nation* always tends to the *ruin* of that nation.

III. A third preliminary remark is, that laws may be of *two kinds*, either *written*, or in the *breasts of magistrates*. In every constitution of note, there is something of *each* of these kinds. It is uncertain whether it is better to have *many* or *few* special laws. On the one hand, it seems to be the very spirit of a free constitution, to have every thing as strictly *defined* as possible, and to leave little in the power of the *judge*. But on the other hand, a *multiplicity* of laws is so apt to lead to *litigation*, and to end in *ambiguity*, that perhaps judges of *equity*, chosen by the district in which they live and are to act, and chosen but for *a time*, would be a more just and equitable method of ending differences. But the difficulty of settling a constitution so as always to secure the election of *impartial judges*, has made modern states, where there is liberty, prefer a *multiplicity* of written laws.

IV. The last preliminary remark is, that no human constitution can be so formed, but that there must be *exceptions* to every law. So that there may be in every nation, oppression under *form of law*, according to the old maxim, *summum jus summa injuria*. This further shews the necessity of forming the *manners* of a people.

After having laid down these preliminaries, we may observe that the *object* of civil laws may be divided into the *three* following particulars.

1. To ratify the *moral laws* by the sanction of *the society*. The transgression of such laws are called *crimes*, as *profanity, adultery, murder, calumny, &c.* And they are prosecuted and punished by order of the public, according to the spirit of every constitution.

2. To lay down a plan for all *contracts* in the commerce or intercourse between man and man. To show when a contract is *valid*, and how to be *proved*. The transgressions of such laws are called *frauds*. They chiefly regard the *acquisition, transmission, or alienation* of property.

3. To *limit* and *direct* persons in the exercise of their *own rights*, and oblige them to show respect to the interfering rights of *others*. This contains the whole of what is called the *police* of a country.—And the transgression of such laws are called *trespasses*. A number of things in this view may become *illegal*, which before were not *immoral*.

#### OF THE SANCTION OF THE MORAL LAWS.

In all polished nations, there are *punishments* annexed to the transgression of the moral laws, whether against *God*, our *neigh-*

*bour*, or *ourselves*; in the doing of which, the *three* following things are chiefly necessary.

1. To determine *what crimes*, and what *degree* of the same crime, are to be inquired into by the civil magistrate. It is of necessity that in a free state crimes should be precisely defined, that men may not be *ignorantly* or *rashly* drawn into them. There are degrees of every crime—profanity, impurity, violence, slander, that are blameable in point of *morals*, nay, even such as may fall under the discipline of a *religious society*—that if they were made cognizable by the *civil magistrate*, would *multiply* laws and trials beyond measure.

2. To appoint the methods of *ascertaining* the *commission* of crimes. This is usually by *testimony*, in which we are to consider the *number* and *character* of the witnesses. Generally through Christendom, and indeed most other parts of the world, *two* witnesses have been esteemed necessary to fix crimes upon an accused person; not but that the positive evidence of *one* person of judgment and *untainted character* is not, in many cases, sufficient to gain belief, and often stronger than *two* of unknown or *doubtful credit*, but it was necessary to lay down some *rule*, and *two* are required to guard against the danger of *hired* evidence, and to give an opportunity of trying how they *agree* together.

To have required *more* would have made a proof difficult or impossible in many cases.

It seems to be a maxim in law, and founded on reason, that in the case of what are called *occult crimes*, such as *murder*, *adultery*, *forgery*, and some others, where the nature of the thing shows that there must be a *penury* of evidence, they sometimes content themselves with *fewer* witnesses, if there are corroborating circumstances to strengthen their testimony.

It seems to be a matter not easily decided, whether it be agreeable to reason and justice, in the case of very atrocious crimes, that on account of the *atrociousness*, *less* evidence should be sufficient for conviction, or that *more* should be required. On the one hand, the more *atrocious the crime*, the *greater the hurt to society*, and the more need of public vengeance. On the other hand, the more atrocious the crime, and the heavier the punishment, it seems agreeable to justice that the conviction should be upon the *more unquestioned evidence*. Lawyers are seen to take their common places, sometimes the one way, sometimes the other. It is often thought that in *practice*, *less* evidence is sufficient to convict a man of *murder*, *forgery*, *rape*, and other crimes of a deep dye. But I am persuaded that the appearance is owing to the greater and more general *eagerness to discover* the perpetrators of such crimes. Others are suffered to escape more *easily*, not that



more evidence is *necessary*, but that it is more *difficult* to get at the evidence.

Evidence may be distinguished into two kinds, *direct* and *circumstantial*. *Direct* evidence is when the witnesses swear to their *sight* or *knowledge* of the accused committing the crime. *Circumstantial*, when they only swear to *certain facts*, which cannot be supposed to have existed unless the crime had been committed. As a man *found dead*—another found *near the place*—with a *weapon bloody*,—or *clothes bloody*, &c. Some have affirmed that *circumstantial* evidence is stronger than *direct*, but it must be taken with very great caution and judgment.

3. The law is to *proportion* and *appoint* the punishment due to every crime when proven.

Punishment in all regular states is taken wholly out of the hands of the *injured persons*, and committed to the *magistrate*, though in many or most cases the injured party is suffered to join the magistrate in the prosecution, and to have a certain claim, by way of reparation, as far as that is practicable.

Therefore the punishment in general must consist of *two* parts, (1.) *reparation* to the sufferer, (2.) the *vindicta publica*, which has sometimes two ends in view, to be an *example* to others, and to *reclaim* and *reform* the offender, as in corporal punishment less than death. Sometimes but *one*, the *good of*

others in the example, as in capital punishments and banishment.

The *kind* of punishment, and the *degree*, is left wholly to different law-givers, and the spirit of different constitutions. *Public utility* is the rule. Punishment is not always proportioned to the *atrociousness* of the crime in point of morals, but to the *frequency* of it, and the danger of its prevailing.

Some nations *require*, and some will *bear* greater severity in punishments than others.

The *same* or *similar* conduct often produces *opposite* effects. Severe laws and severe punishments, sometimes *banish* crimes but very often the *contrary*. When laws are very sanguinary, it often makes the subjects hate the *law* more than they *fear* it, and the transition is very easy, from hating *the law* to hating *those* who are entrusted with the *execution* of it. Such a state of things threatens *insurrections* and *convulsions*, if not the *dissolution* of a government.

Another usual effect of excessive severity in laws is, that they are *not put in execution*. The *public* is not willing to lend its aid to the discovery and conviction of offenders; so that in time the law itself becomes a mere *brutum fulmen*, and loses its authority.

I may make one particular remark, that though *many* things are copied from the law of Moses into the laws of the modern nations, yet, so far as I know, *none* of them

have introduced the *lex talionis* in the case of injuries, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, &c. and yet perhaps there are *many instances* in which it would be *very proper*. The *equity* of the punishment would be quite *manifest*, and probably it would be as effectual *a restraint* from the commission of injury, as any that could be chosen.

The concluding remark shall be, that it is but *seldom* that very *severe* and *sanguinary* laws are of *service* to the good order of a state; but after laws have been fixed with as much *equity* and *moderation* as possible, the *execution* of them should be *strict* and *rigorous*. Let the laws be *just*, and the magistrate *inflexible*.

## LECTURE XV.

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II. THE second object of civil laws being to *regulate the making of contracts*, and the whole intercourse between man and man, relating to the acquisition, possession and alienation of property, we must consider carefully the nature of

## CONTRACTS.

A contract is a *stipulation between two parties, before at liberty, to make some alteration of property, or to bind one or both parties to the performance of some service.*

Contracts are absolutely *necessary* in social life. Every transaction almost may be considered as a contract, either more or less explicit.

The principal thing which constitutes a contract is, *consent*. But in some kinds of contracts, viz. the *gratuitous*, the consent of the *receiver* is presumed. In the transmission of estates by donation or testament this is presumed—and those who are incapable of giving their consent, through *infancy*, may notwithstanding acquire property and rights. When a man comes into a settled country

and purchases property, he is supposed, besides every other part of the bargain, to purchase it under *such conditions*, and subject himself to *such laws*, as are in force in *that country*.

Contracts are said to be of *three degrees* in point of *fulness* and *precision*—1. A simple *affirmation of a design as to futurity*—as when I say to any one that I shall go to such a place to-morrow: this is not properly binding, and it is supposed that many things may occur to make me alter my resolution—yet a *frequent* alteration of professed purposes gives the character of *levity*; therefore a prudent man will be cautious of declaring his purposes till he is well determined. 2. *A gratuitous promise* of doing some favour to me. This is not made binding in *law*, nor does it usually convey a *perfect right*, because it supposes that the person who was the object of good-will may, by altering his behaviour, *forfeit his title* to it, or that the person promising may find it much more *inconvenient, costly, or hurtful to himself*, than he supposed; or, lastly, that what was intended as a *service*, if performed, appears plainly to be an *injury*. In the last case every one must see, that it cannot be binding; but in the two former, I apprehend that in all *ordinary cases* a distant promise is binding in *conscience*, though it may not be necessary to make it binding in *law*. I say all *ordinary cases*, because it is easy to

figure a case in which I may make a promise to another, and such circumstances may afterwards occur as I am quite confident, if the person knew, he would not hold me to my promise.

3. The third degree is a *complete contract*, with *consent* on both sides, and *obligation* upon one or both.

The *essentials* of a contract, which render it *valid*, and any of which being wanting, it is *void*, are as follow :

That it be, (1.) *Free*. (2.) *Mutual*. (3.) *Possible*. (4.) *Lawful*. (5.) *With a capable person*. (6.) *Formal*.

First. It must be free. Contracts made by *unjust force* are void always in *law*, and sometimes in *conscience*. It must however be *unjust force*, because in treaties of peace between nations, as we have seen before, force does not void the contract ; and even in private life sometimes men are forced to enter into contracts by the order of a magistrate, sometimes by the threatening of legal prosecution, which does not make them void.

(2.) They must be *mutual*, that is, the *consent* of the *one* as well as that of the *other* must be had. Contracts in this view become void, either by *fraud on one side*, or by *essential error*. If any man contrives a contract so as to bind the other party, and keep himself free, this fraud certainly nullifies the agreement—or if there is an essential error in the person or the thing, as if a person

should oblige himself to one man, supposing him to be another.

(3.) Contracts should be of things *evidently possible*, and probably *in our power*. Contracts, by which men oblige themselves to do things *impossible*, are no doubt void from the *beginning*; but if the impossibility was *known* to the contracting party, it must have been either *absurd* or *fraudulent*. When things engaged for become impossible by the *operation of Providence*, without a man's own fault, the contract is *void*, and he is *guiltless*—as if a man should covenant to deliver at a certain place and time a number of cattle, and when he is almost at the place of destination they should be killed by thunder, or any other accident, out of his power.

(4.) Contracts must be of *things lawful*. All engagements to do things *unlawful* are from the *beginning* void; but by unlawful must be understood the violation of *perfect rights*. If a man oblige himself for a reward to commit *murder*, or any kind of *fraud*, the engagement is void; but it was *criminal* in the *transacting*, and the reward ought to be returned, or given to public uses. There are many contracts, however, which are very blameable in *making*, that must, notwithstanding, be *kept*, and must not be made void in law—as *rash* and *foolish bargains*, where there was no fraud on the other side. If such were to be voided, great confusion would be introduced. The cases

of this kind are numerous, and may be greatly diversified.

(5.) Contracts must be made with a *capable person*, that is to say, of *age, understanding, at liberty, &c.* It is part of the civil law, or rather municipal law, of every country, to fix the *time of life* when persons are supposed capable of transacting their own affairs. *Some time* must be fixed, otherwise it would occasion numberless disputes; difficult to be decided. *A man* at the age of *fourteen*, and *a woman* at *twelve*, may choose *guardians*, who can alienate their property, and at the age of *twenty-one* they have their estates wholly in their own hand.

(6.) Contracts must be *formal*.

The laws of every country limit a great many circumstances of the *nature, obligation, extent, and duration* of contracts.

Having pointed out something of the *essential characters* of all lawful contracts; I observe, they may be divided two different ways, 1. Contracts are either *absolute* or *conditional*. The absolute are such as are suspended upon *no condition*, but such as are essential to every contract, which have been mentioned above. Such as when a person makes a *settlement* upon another, *without reserve*, then, whether he behave *well* or *ill*, whether it be *convenient* or *inconvenient*, it must be *fulfilled*. *Conditional* contracts are those that are *suspended* or any uncertain *future contingency*, or some *performance* by



the *opposite party*. Of this last sort are almost all transactions in the way of commerce,—which leads to the 2nd. way of dividing contracts, into *beneficent* and *onerous*. The first is when one *freely brings himself* under an obligation to *bestow any favour* or do any *service*, as *donations* or *legacies*, and undertaking the office of *guardian* of another person's estate.

The *onerous* contract is when an *equal value* is supposed to be given on *both sides*, as is the case for the most part in the *alienation of property*—and the transactions between man and man, and between society and society.

To this place belongs the question about the lawfulness of *lending money upon interest*. If we consider money as an *instrument of commerce*, and giving an opportunity of making profit, there seems plainly to be nothing *unjust*, that the lender should *share* in the *advantage* arising from his own property.

The chief thing necessary is, that the state or governing part of the society should settle the *rate* of interest, and not suffer it to depend upon the *necessity* of the *poor* or the *covetousness* of the *rich*. If it is not settled by *law*, *usury* will be the certain consequence.

The law of Moses does not seem to have admitted the taking of interest at all from an *Israelite*. It is thought, however, that the main reason of this must have been drawn from something in *their constitution*, as a state;

that rendered it improper ; for if it had been in itself *immoral*, they would not have been permitted to take it of *strangers*.

OF THE MARKS OR SIGNS OF CONTRACTS.

All known and intelligent *marks of consent* are the *signs* and *means* of completing contracts. The chief of these however, are *words and writing*, as being found the most easy and useful. *Words* are of all others the most natural and proper for giving *immediate* consent, and *writing* to *perpetuate* the memory of the transaction. There are however, many *other signs* that may be made use of, and wherever there is a real purpose of signifying our intention, by which others are brought to *depend* upon it, the engagement is *real*, and we are bound in *conscience*, though the *law* in every country must of necessity be more limited. The whole rests ultimately on the obligation to *sincerity* in the social life.

This obligation arises from the *testimony of conscience*, and from the manifest *utility* and even *necessity* of sincerity to social intercourse.

Signs are divided into *natural, instituted, and customary*. *Natural* signs are those which have either a *real likeness* to the thing signified, or such a known and universal *relation* to it, that all men must naturally be led from the one to the other—as a *picture*

is a natural sign, because a representation of the thing painted. An *inflamed sullen countenance* and *fiery eyes*, are natural signs of *anger*, because they are the universal effects of that passion.

*Instituted signs* are those that have no other connexion with the thing signified, than what has been made by *agreement*; as if two persons shall agree between themselves, that if the one wants to signify to the other at a distance, that he wishes him to come to his assistance, he will *kindle a fire* upon a certain *hill*, or hang out a *flag* upon a certain *pinnacle of his house*, or some part of his *ship*. Words and writing are properly *instituted signs*, for they have no relation to the thing signified but what original agreement and long custom has given them.

*Customary signs* are no other than instituted signs which have *long prevailed*, and whose institution has either been accidental or has been forgotten. It is also usual to apply the word *customary* to such signs as depend upon the *mode* and *fashion* of particular countries. There are some *signs* and *postures*, which though they may seem perfectly *arbitrary*, have obtained very generally, perhaps universally, as *bending down the body*, or *prostration*, as a sign of *respect* and *reverence*; *kneeling*, and *lifting up the hands*, as a sign of *submission* and *supplication*.— Perhaps both these are *natural*, as they put

the person into the situation least capable of *resistance*.

Sometimes there is a *mixture* of natural and instituted signs, as if a man sends a *pair of wings*, or the figure of them, to a friend, to intimate his danger, and the necessity of *flying*.

In the *use* of signs, the great rule of sincerity is, that wherever we are *bound*, and wherever we *profess* to communicate our intention, we ought to use the signs in the *least ambiguous manner possible*. When we have no *intention*, and are under no *obligation* to communicate any thing to others, it is of small moment what *appearances* are; it is their business not to make any *unnecessary* or *uncertain inferences*. A *light* in a house, in the *middle of the night*, will perhaps suggest most probably, to a traveller accidentally passing, that there is somebody *sick* in that house; yet perhaps it is *extraordinary study or business* that keeps some person awake.

Nay, when there is no obligation to *give*, nor any reason for the party to *expect* true information, it is held generally no crime at all, to use such signs as we have reason to suppose will be *mistaken*; as when one who does not desire to be disturbed keeps his *chamber close shut*, that people may conclude *he is not there*. When a general of an army puts a *fire* in the camp, to conceal his *march* or *retreat*. And probably none would think

it faulty, when there was an apprehension of *thieves*, to keep a *light burning* in a chamber, to lead them to suppose the whole family is not at rest.

There are some who place in the same rank, *evasive phrases*, when there is an *apparent* intention to speak our mind, but no *right* in the other to obtain it. Such expressions may be strictly *true*, and yet there is all probability that the hearer will *misunderstand* them. As if one should ask if a person was in any house, and should receive for answer, *he went away yesterday morning*, when perhaps he *returned* the same evening. I look upon these evasions, however, as *very doubtful*, and indeed rather *not to be chosen*, because they seem to contain a profession of telling our real mind.

Some mention *ironical speech* as an *exception* to the obligation to sincerity. But it is properly no objection at all, because there is no *deception*. Truth lies not in the *words* themselves, but in the *use* of them as *signs*. Therefore, if a man speak his words in such a *tone* and *manner* as the hearer immediately *conceives*, they are to be taken in an *opposite sense*, and does *really* take them in the sense the speaker *means* them, there is *no falsehood* at all.

Mr. Hutchinson, and some others, allow a *voluntary intended departure from truth*, on occasion of some great *necessity* for a *good end*. This I apprehend is *wrong*, for

we cannot but consider deception as *in itself base and unworthy*, and therefore a good end cannot *justify* it. Besides, to suppose it were in men's power on a *sufficient occasion* to violate truth, would greatly destroy its force in *general*, and its *use* in the social life.

There are two sorts of falsehood, which, because no doubt they are less *aggravated* than malicious interested lies, many admit of, but I think without sufficient reason.

1. *Jocular lies*, when there is a real deception intended, but not in any thing *material*, nor intended to continue *long*. However *harmless* these may seem, I reckon they are to be *blamed*, because it is using too much *freedom* with so sacred a thing as *truth*. And very often such persons, as a righteous punishment in Providence, are left to proceed further, and either to carry their folly to such excess, as to become *contemptible*, or to go beyond *folly* into *malice*.

2. *Officious lies*, telling falsehoods to *children* or *sick persons*, for their good. These very seldom answer the end that is proposed. They lessen the *reverence* for truth; and, particularly with regard to children, are *exceedingly pernicious*; for as they must soon be *discovered*, they lose their force, and teach *them* to deceive. *Truth* and *authority* are methods infinitely preferable, in dealing with *children*, as well as with persons of *riper years*.

## LECTURE XVI.

## OF OATHS AND VOWS.

AMONG the *signs* and *appendages* of contracts, are oaths and vows.

*An oath is an appeal to God, the searcher of hearts, for the truth of what we say, and always expresses or supposes an imprecation of his judgment upon us, if we prevaricate.*

An oath therefore implies a *belief in God*, and his *Providence*, and indeed is an *act of worship*, and so accounted in Scripture, as in that expression, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt swear by his name.* Its use in human affairs is very great, when managed with judgment. It may be applied, and indeed has been commonly used

1. in the *contracts of independent states*, who have no common earthly superior. In *ancient times* it was usual always to close *national treaties* by *mutual oaths*. This form is not so common in *modern times*, yet the *substance* remains; for an *appeal* is always supposed to be made to God, against the *breach* of public faith.

2. It has been adopted by *all nations*, in their *administration of justice*, in order to discover *truth*. The most *common and uni-*

versal application of it has been to add *greater solemnity to the testimony of witnesses*. It is, also sometimes made use of with the parties themselves, for *conviction* or *purgation*. The laws of every country point out the *cases* in which oaths are *required* or *admitted* in public judgment. It is, however, lawful and in common practice, for *private persons*, *voluntarily*, on *solemn occasions*, to confirm what they say, by *oath*. Persons entering on *public offices* are also often obliged to make oath, that they will faithfully execute their trust.

Oaths are commonly divided into two kinds, *assertory* and *promissory*—Those called *purgatory* fall under the first of these divisions. There is perhaps little necessity for *division* of oaths, for they do not properly stand by *themselves*; they are *confirmations* and *appendages* of contracts, and intended as an *additional security* for sincerity, in the commerce between man and man.

Therefore oaths are subject to all *the same regulations as contracts*; or rather oaths are only lawful, when they are in *aid* or *confirmation* of a lawful contract. What therefore *voids* the *one* will *void* the *other*, and *nothing else*. A contract otherwise *unlawful*, cannot be made *binding* by an oath: but there must be a very great caution used not to *make* any unlawful contract, much less to *confirm* it by an *oath*.

It is easy to see the extreme absurdity of



our being obliged to fulfil a *criminal engagement* by oath, for it would imply, that out of reverence to God we ought to *break his commands*; but nothing can be more *abominable*, than the principle of those who think they may safely take an *unlawful oath*, because it is not *binding*: this is aggravating *gross injustice* by *deliberate profanity*.

I have said that oaths are *appendages* to all lawful contracts; but in *assertory* oaths, which are only confirmations of our general obligation to sincerity, it is necessary not only that what we say be *true*, but that the *occasion* be of sufficient *moment* to require or justify a solemn appeal to God. Swearing on *common occasions* is *unnecessary, rash, profane* and destructive of the *solemnity* of an oath and its *real use*.

From the general rule laid down, that oaths are lawful when applied to lawful contracts, it will follow that they become *unlawful only*, when the *fulfilling* of them would be *violating a perfect right*; but perhaps an additional observation is necessary here. Contracts must be fulfilled, when they *violate an imperfect right*; whereas some oaths may be found *criminal and void*, though they are only *contrary* to imperfect rights: as for example, some persons bind themselves rashly by oath, that they will never *speak to or forgive their children*, who have offended them. This is so evidently *criminal*, that nobody will plead for its being *obligatory*,

and yet it is but the violation of an *imperfect right*. The same persons, however, might in many ways *alienate their property* to the *prejudice* of their children, by contracts which the *law* would oblige them to *fulfil*.

In *vows* there is no party but *God* and the *person himself* who makes the vow: for this reason, Mr. Hutchinson relaxes their obligation very much.—Supposing any person had solemnly vowed to give *a certain part of his substance* to *public*, or *pious uses*, he says, if he finds it a *great inconvenience* to himself or family, he is *not bound*; this I apprehend is *too lax*. Men ought to be cautious in *making* such engagements; but I apprehend that *when made*, if not directly criminal, they ought to be *kept*.

#### OF THE USE OF SYMBOLS IN CONTRACTS.

Besides promises and oaths, there is sometimes in contracts a use of other *visible signs called symbols*; the most *common* among us are *signing and sealing* a written deed. There is also, in some places, the *delivery of earth and stone* in making over land—and sundry others. In ancient times, it was usual to have *solemn symbols* in all treaties—*mutual gifts—sacrifices—feasts—setting up pillars*—The *intention* of all such things, whenever and wherever they have been practised, is the *same*. It is to ascertain and keep up *the memory* of the transaction. They were more

frequent and solemn in *ancient* times than *now*, because before the invention of *writing* they were more *necessary*.

#### OF THE VALUE OF PROPERTY.

Before we finish the subject of contracts, it may be proper to say a little of the *nature and value of property*, which is the subject of them. *Nothing* has any *real* value unless it be of some *use* in human life, or perhaps we may say, unless it is *supposed* to be of use, and so becomes the object of *human desire*—because at particular times, and in particular places, things of *very little real importance* acquire a *value*, which is commonly *temporary* and *changeable*. *Shells* and *baubles* are of *great* value in *some* places; perhaps there are some more *baubles* highly valued in *every* place.

But though it is their *use in life* that gives things their value in general, it does not follow that those things that are of *most* use and necessity, are therefore of *greatest* value as *property*, or in *commerce*. *Air* and *water*, perhaps we may add *fire*, are of the *greatest* use and necessity; but they are also in *greatest* *plenty*, and therefore are of *little* value as a *possession* or *property*. Value is in *proportion* to the *plenty* of any commodity, and the *demand* for it. The one taken in the *inverse*, and the other in the *direct proportion*.

Hence it follows that money is of real value. It is not *wealth* properly, but the *sign* of it, and in a fixed state of society the *certain means of procuring* it. In early times, traffic was carried on by *exchange of goods*—but being large, not easily divided or transported, they became very troublesome. Therefore it soon became necessary to fix upon some *sign of wealth*, to be a *standard* by which to *rate* different commodities.

Any thing that is fit to answer the purpose of a common sign of wealth must have the *following properties*: It must be 1. *valuable*, that is, have an *intrinsic commercial value*; and *rare*, otherwise it could have no *comparative* value at all. 2. *Durable*, otherwise it could not *pass from hand to hand*. 3. *Divisible*, so that it might be in larger or smaller quantities as are required. 4. *Portable*, it must not be of *great size*, otherwise it would be extremely *inconvenient*.

*Gold and silver* were soon found to have all *these properties*, and therefore are fixed upon as the sign of wealth. But besides being the *sign* of the value of other commodities, they *themselves* are also *matters of commerce*, and therefore increase or decrease in their *value* by their *plenty* or *scarceness*.

It may seem to belong to the *ruling part* of any society to *fix the value of gold and silver*, as signs of the value of commodities—and no doubt they do fix it *nominally* in their dominions. But in this they are obliged to

be strictly attentive to the *value* of these metals as a *commodity*, from their *plenty* or *scarceness*, otherwise their regulations will be of little force—*other nations* will pay no regard to the *nominal* value of any particular country, and even in *internal commerce*, the subject would fix a value upon the signs according to their plenty.

It is as prejudicial to commerce, to make the nominal value of the coin of any country too *small* as too *great*.

We shall close this part of the subject by speaking a little of the

#### RIGHTS OF NECESSITY, AND COMMON RIGHTS.

These are certain powers *assumed* both by *private persons* and *communities*, which are supposed to be authorised by the *necessity of the case* and supported by the great law of *reason*.

There will remain a *great number of cases* in which the rights of necessity are to be used, even in the *best regulated* civil society, and after the most mature deliberation and foresight of probable events, and provision for them by specific laws.

Were a man *perishing with hunger*, and denied *food* by a person who could easily *afford it* him, here the rights of necessity would justify him in taking it by *violence*. Were a *city on fire*, and the *blowing up of an house* would save the far greater part, though

the owner was *unwilling*, men would think themselves *justified* in doing it, whether he would or not. Much more would men, in cases of urgent necessity, *make free* with the *property* of others, without asking their consent, but *presuming* upon it.

In our own government, where, by the love of liberty general among the people, and the nature of the constitutions, as many particulars have been determined by *special laws* as in any government in the world—yet instances of the rights of necessity occur *every day*. If I see one man rob another upon the highway, or am *informed* of it, if I have courage and ability I pursue the robber, and *apprehend* him without any *warrant*, and carry him before a magistrate, to get a warrant for what I have *already done*. Nothing is more common in Britain than to force people to *sell their inheritance*, or a *part* of it, to make a *road* or street *strait* or *convenient*. In this instance it is not so much *necessity* as great *utility*.

The question of the greatest moment here is, whether the *establishing* these rights of necessity does not derogate from the *perfection* and *immutability* of the *moral laws*. If it be true, that we may break in upon the laws of *justice* for the sake of *utility*, is not this admitting the *exploded* maxim, that we may *do evil that good may come*? I answer, that these rights of necessity have in general *property* as their object, or at most *the life*

of particular persons—and it seems to be inseparable from the *establishment* of property in the social state, that our property is to be held only *in such manner*, and to such a *degree*, as to be both *consistent with*, and *subservient to*, the good of *others*. And therefore these *extraordinary cases* are agreeable to the *tacit or implied conditions* of the social contract.

In rights of necessity we are to consider not only the *present* good or evil, but for *all time to come*, and particularly the safety or danger of *the example*. Where the *repetition* of the thing in *similar circumstances* would have a *fatal effect*, it ought not to be done. If a city were under all the miseries of *famine*, and a ship or two should arrive with *grain*, the owner of which would *not sell* it but at a most *exorbitant price*, perhaps *equity* might admit that they should be *compelled*; but if any such thing were done, it would prevent others from *going near that place again*.

It would be of no consequence to *determine* these rights of necessity by *law*. If the law described circumstantially what might be done, it would be no longer a right of *necessity*, but a *legal right*. To *forbid* them by law would be either *ineffectual*, or it would *abolish* them altogether, and deprive the society of the *benefit* of them when the cases should occur. Things done by the rights of necessity are *by supposition illegal*.

and if the *necessity* does not *excuse*, the person who pretends them may be *punished*. If I am aiding in pulling down a man's house on *pretence* of stopping a fire, if he afterwards makes it appear that there was not *the least occasion* for it, or that I, being his *enemy*, took the opportunity of this pretence to *injure* him, he will obtain *reparation*.

As property, or at most life, is concerned in the rights of necessity—still the moral laws continue in force. Whatever expresses an *evil disposition of mind* does not fall under the rule, because it can never be *necessary* to the doing of any *good*. The pretence of its being necessary in some cases is generally *chimerical*, and even were it real, the *necessity* could not *justify* the crime—as suppose a robber very profane should threaten a man with *death*, unless he would *blaspheme God*, or *curse his parents*, &c.

There are certain things called *common rights*, which the public is supposed to have over every member: the chief of them are

1. *diligence*. As a man must eat, the community have a right to compel him to be useful—and have a right to make laws against *suicide*.
2. They have a right to the *discovery of useful inventions*, provided an adequate price be paid to the discoverer.
3. They have a right to *insist* upon such things as belong to the *dignity of human nature*. Thus all nations pay respect to *dead bodies*, though there is no other reason for it.



but that we cannot help *associating* with the body, even *dead*, the ideas which arise from it, and belonged to the *whole person when alive*.

III. The third and last object of civil laws is, *limiting citizens in the exercise of their rights*, so that they may not be injurious to one another; but that the public good may be promoted.

This includes the giving *directions* in what way *arts* and *commerce* may be carried on, and in some states extends as far as the *possessions* of private persons.

It includes the whole of what is called the *police* of a community—the manner of *travelling, building, marketing, time and manner of holding* all sorts of *assemblies*—In *arts* and *commerce*, particularly, the *police* shows its power.

It will only be necessary here to make a few remarks on the *nature* and *spirit* of those laws.

1. Those things in *themselves* are *arbitrary*, and *mutable*, for there is no *morality* in them but what arises from common *utility*. We may sometimes do things in a way *better* than that appointed by law, and yet it is not *allowed*.

2. Men in general have but a very *light sense* of the *malignity* of *transgressing* these laws, such as *running of goods, breaking over a fence, &c.*

3. In the best constitutions some *sanctions*

are appointed for the *breach* of these laws. Wherever a state is founded upon the principles of *liberty*, such laws are made with *severity*, and executed with *strictness*.

Finally, a man of real *probity* and *virtue* adopts these laws as a part of his *duty to God* and *the society*, and is subject not only for *wrath*, but also for *conscience' sake*.

## RECAPITULATION.



HAVING gone through the three general divisions of this subject, *Ethics*, *Politics*, and *Jurisprudence*, I shall conclude with a few remarks upon *the whole*, and mention to you the chief *writers*, who have distinguished themselves in this branch of science.

1. You may plainly perceive both how *extensive* and how *important* moral philosophy is. As to extent, each of the divisions we have gone through, might have been treated at far greater *length*. Nor would it be unprofitable to enter into a fuller disquisition of many points; but this must be left to every scholar's inclination and opportunities in future life. Its *importance* is manifest from this circumstance, that it not only points out *personal duty*, but is related to the *whole business* of active life. The languages, and even mathematical and natural knowledge, are but *hard words* to this *superior science*.

2. The *evidence* which attends moral disquisitions is of a *different kind* from that which attends mathematics and natural philosophy; but it remains as a point to be discussed, whether it is more *uncertain* or *not*. At first sight it appears that authors *differ*

much *more*, and *more essentially*, on the principles of *moral* than *natural* philosophy. Yet perhaps a time may come when men, treating *moral* philosophy as Newton and his successors have done, *natural*, may arrive at greater precision. It is always safer in our reasonings to trace facts *upwards*, than to reason *downwards*, upon metaphysical principles. An attempt has been lately made by Beatty, in his Essay on Truth, to establish certain impressions of *common sense* as *axioms* and *first principles* of all our reasonings on moral subjects.

3. The differences about the *nature of virtue* are not in *fact* so great as they *appear*: they amount to nearly the *same thing* in the *issue*, when the particulars of a virtuous life come to be enumerated.

4. The different *foundations of virtue* are many of them not *opposite* or *repugnant* to each other, but *parts* of one great plan—as *benevolence* and *self-love*, &c. They all conspire to *found* real virtue: *the authority of God*—*the dictates of conscience*—*public happiness* and *private interest*, all coincide.

5. There is nothing *certain* or *valuable* in moral philosophy, but what is perfectly coincident with *the scripture*, where the *glory of God* is the *first principle* of action, arising from the subjection of the creature—where the *good of others* is the *great object of duty*, and *our own interest* the necessary consequence.

In the first dawn of philosophy, men began to write and dispute about virtue. The great inquiry among the ancients was, what was the *summum bonum*? by which it seems they took it for granted, that *virtue* and *happiness* were the same thing. The chief combatants here, were the *Stoics* and *Epicureans*. The first insisted, that *virtue* was the *summum bonum*, that *pleasure* was no *good*, and *pain* no *evil*: the other said, that the *summum bonum* consisted in *pleasure*, or rather that *pleasure* was *virtue*: the *Academics* and *Platonists* went a middle way between these.

I am not sensible that there is any thing among the *ancients*, that wholly corresponds with the *modern* dispute upon the *foundation of virtue*.

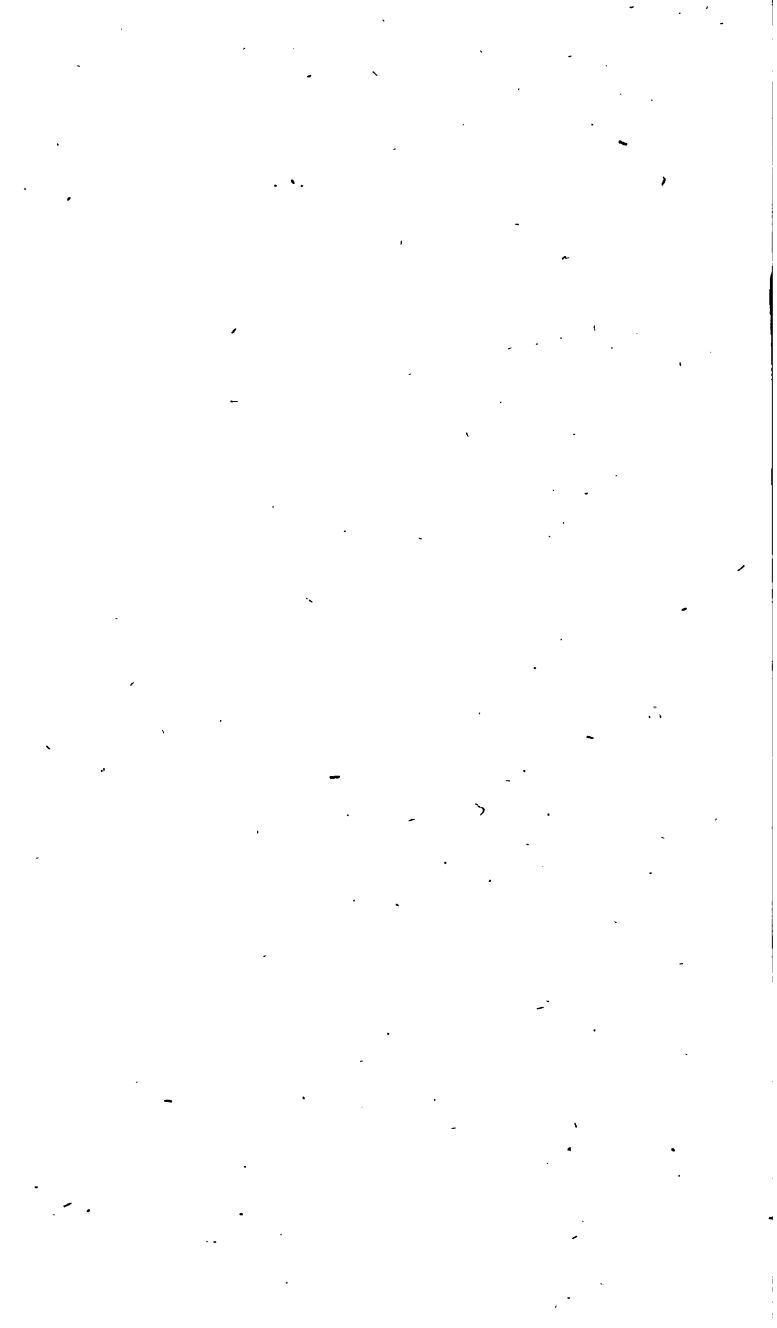
Since the disputes arose in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, some of the most *considerable authors*, chiefly *British*, are *Leibnitz*, his *Theodicee*, and his *Letters*. *Clark's Demonstration*, and his *Letters*. *Hutchinson's Inquiries* into the ideas of beauty and virtue, and his *System*. *Wolaston's Religion of Nature Delineated*. *Collins on Human Liberty*. *Nettleton on Virtue and Happiness*. *David Hume's Essays*. *Lord Kaims's Essays*. *Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments*. *Reid's Inquiry*.\* *Balfour's De-*

\* *Note by the Editor*.—The *Essays* of *Reid* and *Stewart*, and *Vattel's Law of Nations*, published since those *Lectures* were written, merit a place in this catalogue.

*lineation of Morality. Butler's Analogy and Sermons. Balguy's Tracts. Theory of Agreeable Sensations, from the French. Beatty on Truth. Essay on Virtue and Harmony.*

To these may be added the whole *Deistical writers*, and the answers written to each of them in particular, a brief account of which may be seen in *Leland's View of the Deistical Writers*.

Some of the chief writers upon government and politics are. *Grotius, Puffendorf, Barberac, Cumberland, Selden, Burlamaqui, Hobbes, Machiavel, Harrington, Locke, Sydney*, and some late books; *Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws; Ferguson's History of Civil Society; Lord Kaims's Political Essays; Grandeur and Decay of the Roman Empire; Montague's Rise and Fall of Ancient Republics; Goguet's Rise and Progress of Laws, Arts, and Sciences.*



**AN ADDRESS**  
**TO THE**  
**STUDENTS OF THE SENIOR CLASS,**  
*On the Lord's Day*  
**PRECEDING COMMENCEMENT,**  
*Sept. 23, 1775.*

**GENTLEMEN,**

**AS** you have now finished the usual course of study in this place, and are to enter upon public life in a variety of ways, as each shall be determined by inclination or other circumstances; I willingly embrace the opportunity of addressing an exhortation to you, at this important and interesting period of your lives. I do not mean to say much, if any thing, that you have never heard before, but to lay hold of your present situation, with some hope, that what may be said now, will remain upon your memory, and have an influence upon your future conduct. That I may speak with the greater clearness and precision, I will divide what I have to say, into three branches. 1. Your duty to God, and



the interest of your souls. 2. The prosecution of your studies, or the improvement of your talents, as members of society. 3. Prudence in your commerce with the world in general, your outward provision, and other circumstances in life.

I. As to the first of these, it is to all men of the greatest moment. Some of you, I know, and more, I hope, are intended for the service of Christ in the ministry. To this we have the universal suffrage, that true religion is absolutely necessary, with which I heartily agree. But I wish those who are destined for other employments, may not sometimes make a comparison here, unjust in itself, and dangerous, perhaps even ruinous, to their own souls. Because true religion is necessary to a minister, and they are conscious to themselves, or at least suspect, that they are without religion; instead of laying to heart the things that belong to their peace, they only determine that they will follow some other calling. But, alas! though the difference to the public is very great, the difference to the persons themselves, seems to me but very small. A clergyman without religion, to be sure is a dreadful character, and, when visible, a detestable one; but truly, one would think at the close of life, it will be but little comfort to a man, that he must go to the place of torment, not as a minister, but as a lawyer, physician, soldier, or merchant. Therefore suffer me to say to

you, and to all who now hear me, that the care of your souls is the one thing needful. All mankind, of every rank, denomination and profession, are sinners by nature. The ministers of the New Testament have received a commission to preach the gospel to every creature: "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

While I say this, I beg of you to consider that the advantages which you have enjoyed, will be an aggravation of your guilt, if they are unimproved. There is an equity as well as wisdom often to be observed in the providence of God. Unless reasons of sovereignty, that is, reasons unknown to us, prevent it, judgment will be inflicted, when a person or people is ripe for the stroke. Therefore, as some plants and seeds, both from their own nature, and from the soil and situation in which they are placed, ripen sooner than others, so some persons, by the early pains taken upon them, and the privileges they have enjoyed, fill up the measure of their iniquities sooner than others, and are more speedily overtaken with deserved vengeance. There are many common sayings that are the effects of error and prejudice; for example, that which you will be told by many, that the children of good men are as bad as any. If this is intended to insinuate that a regular and pious education affords no ground to hope for good behaviour in after

life, it is at once contrary to reason and experience. But if we should say that when young persons piously educated, burst restraining bonds asunder, and are seduced into vicious courses, they commonly run faster and farther than others, it is a certain fact, which may be easily accounted for, and affords an important instruction to all.

After intreating you to lay religion to heart, I must beseech you to guard against being too easily satisfied in a matter of infinite moment. Do not think it enough to be prudent, cautious, or decent in your conduct, or to attain a character formed upon worldly principles, and governed by worldly motives. I am not against (as you all know) introducing every argument against sin, and shewing you that loose practices are ruinous to name, body, and estate. Neither is it wrong that you should fortify every pious resolution by the addition of these motives. But, alas! the evil lies deeper. "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." True religion must arise from a clear and deep conviction of your lost state by nature and practice, and an unfeigned reliance on the pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace of God.

Suffer me, upon this subject, earnestly to recommend to all that fear God, to apply themselves from their earliest youth, to the exercises of piety, a life of prayer and communion with God. This is the source from

which a real Christian must derive the secret comfort of his heart, and which alone will give beauty, consistency, and uniformity, to an exemplary life. The reason why I have mentioned it on this occasion is, that youth, when the spirits are lively, and the affections vigorous and strong, is the season when this habit must be formed. There are advantages and disadvantages attending every stage of life. An aged Christian will naturally grow in prudence, vigilance, usefulness, attention to the course of providence, and subjection to the Divine will; but will seldom attain to greater fervour of affection, and life in divine worship, than he had been accustomed to from his early years. On the contrary, he will generally see it necessary instead of trusting to occasional impulses, to guard and strengthen the habit by order and form.

Be companions of them that fear God. Esteem them always most highly, and shun, as a contagious pestilence, the society not only of loose persons, but of those especially whom you perceive to be infected with the principles of infidelity, or enemies to the power of religion.—Many of these are much more dangerous to pious persons than open profligates. As for these last, decency is against them; the world itself condemns them; reason despises them, and prudence shuns them. He must have a very mean taste indeed, who is capable of finding plea-

sure in disorder and riot. If I had no higher pleasure on earth than in eating and drinking, I would not choose to eat and drink with the drunken. Order, neatness, elegance, and even moderation itself, are necessary to exalt and refine the pleasures of a sensual life. Therefore I will not allow myself to suppose, that I shall afterwards hear of any of you roaring and swearing in taverns, or wasting your bodies and estates by lewdness and debauchery, or that you take pleasure in those who do so. But be especially careful to avoid those who are enemies to vital piety, who do not pretend to speak directly against religion, but give every vile name they can think of, to all who seem to be in earnest on that subject, and vilify the exercises of religion, under the names of whining, cant, grimace, and hypocrisy. These are often unhappily successful in making some uncautious persons ashamed of their Redeemer's name, his truths, his laws, his people, and his cross.

I need hardly observe, that this is not to be understood as recommending pharisaical pride and superciliousness; far less, a rash and presumptuous judging of the state of others. It is not only lawful, but our duty, to have a free communication with our fellow-citizens, for the purposes of social life: it is not only lawful, but our duty to be courteous, and to give every proper evidence of respect and attention to others, ac-

ording to their rank and place in society. What I mean to caution you against is, an unnecessary, voluntary intercourse, such as has inclination for its motive, and pleasure for its object. With respect to this, we need not hesitate to say, with the inspired prophet, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

II. I come now to speak a little upon the prosecution of your studies, and the improvement of your talents. Your education in a seminary of learning, is only intended to give you the elements and first principles of science, which should whet your appetite for more, and which will enable you to proceed with an assured hope of success. It hath been generally a favourite point with me, to recommend the union of piety and literature, and to guard young persons against the opposite extremes. We see sometimes the pride of unsanctified knowledge, do great injury to religion; and on the other hand, we find some persons of real piety, despising human learning, and disgracing the most glorious truths, by a meanness and indecency hardly sufferable in their manner of handling them. On this account, industry and application to study, is of the utmost importance to those who are intended for the office of the ministry.

But I have it further in view, to recommend to you all, without exception, a life of

diligence and application. Avoid sloth, as a dangerous enemy. Fear it, hate it, and despise it. It is a common saying, that men do not know their own weakness; but it is as true, and a truth more important, that they do not know their own strength. I desire that you will receive the following information from me, which I dare say, every person of judgment and experience will confirm; that multitudes of moderate capacity have been useful in their generation, respected by the public, and successful in life, while those of superior talents from nature, by mere slothfulness and idle habits, or self-indulgence, have lived useless, and died contemptible. There is also a disposition in young people, which you know I have often set myself to oppose; to think that loose, irregular sallies, and sometimes even vicious liberties, are a sign of spirit and capacity. The very contrary is the truth. It requires no genius at all to do mischief. Persons of the greatest ability have generally been lovers of order. Neither is there any instance to be found, of a man's arriving at great reputation or usefulness, be his capacity what it might, without industry and application.

Suffer me here, in a particular manner, to recommend to you a firmness of mind, and steady perseverance, as of the utmost moment to your progress and success. Whatever a man's talents from nature may be, if he apply himself to what is not altogether

unsuitable to them, and holds on with steadiness and uniformity, he will be useful and happy; but if he be loose and volatile, impatient of the slowness of things in their usual course, and shifting from project to project, he will probably be neither the one nor the other.

I am somewhat at a loss what to say, as to character and reputation; yet it is so important a point, that it must not be omitted. True religion should furnish you with a higher and nobler principle to govern your conduct, than the desire of applause from men. Yet, in subordination to what ought to be the great purpose of life, the approbation of the Supreme Judge, there is a just and laudable ambition to do what is praiseworthy among men. This ought not to be extinguished in the minds of youth; being a powerful spur and incitement to virtuous or illustrious actions. A truly good man will seek no praise but by honest means, and will be superior even to disgrace itself, if brought upon him by adherence to his duty. Yet he will also be tender and careful, not to give just cause to any to impeach his conduct. If I might be permitted to direct your views upon this subject, I would say, consider that your character is already beginning to form. Every step you take further in life, will both ascertain and spread it. You ought also to be informed, that notwithstanding all the hackneyed complaints of the partiality and cen-



seriousness of the world, a man's real character, in point of ability, is *never* mistaken, and but *seldom* in point of morals. That there are many inalicious and censorious persons, I agree; but lies are not half so durable as truth. There is an impartiality in a diffusive public, which will shew itself where means of information are afforded to it. Therefore reverence the judgment of mankind without idolizing it. Be as cautious as possible to do nothing that deserves censure; and as little concerned as possible what reproaches may fall upon you undeserved. It is not a contradiction, but perfectly consistent to say, a man should be tender and even jealous of his character, and yet not greedy of praise. There is an amiableness and dignity in the first, but a meanness and littleness in the last.

Another advice, near a-kin to the last, is, do as much as you can to deserve praise, and yet avoid as much as possible the hearing of it. This is but another view of the same subject; and that it may be the more useful, and my intention in it the more manifest, I will extend it both to praise and dispraise. When you come into public life, and become the objects of general attention, not only guard against fishing for applause, and being inquisitive after what people think or say of you, but avoid knowing it as much as you decently can. My reason for this is, that whether you will or not, you will hear

as much of the slanders of your enemies as you will bear with patience, and as much of the flattery of your friends, or intersted persons, as you will bear with humility. Therefore, prepare yourself for both, but seek for neither. Several eminent authors, as you doubtless know, have given it as an advice to young clergymen, and other public speakers, to get a friend who is a good judge, and intreat him to make remarks upon their composition, carriage, delivery, &c. with fidelity. I have nothing to say against the goodness of the advice in itself, but at the same time I have no great conviction of the necessity or even the utility of it. It is very seldom that advice is asked in this manner, but with a view to obtain a compliment; and still seldomer that it is given with sufficient freedom and impartiality. If any man has humility and self-denial enough to wish to know his own faults, there will be little difficulty in discovering them. Or if we would suppose, there were difficulty to himself, his enemies or rivals, or talkative people, though they be neither the one nor the other, will supply the defect. Perhaps you will think, that in the strictures of malice and envy, there is generally an acrimony that has no great tendency to reform; like a rusty knife, which makes a very painful wound, though not very deep. I agree to this fully, and yet affirm, that there is so much the more virtue, so much the more

wisdom, and perhaps I may add, so much the more pleasure in making this use of them.

I conclude this part of my subject, with advising you to maintain a friendship with one another, and to carry the intimacies of early life, through the whole of it. To this I add, that you ought to desire and cultivate the correspondence of men of piety and learning. Man made for society, derives his chief advantages of every kind, from the united efforts of many conspiring to the same end.—As to piety, nothing is more essential to it, than social communication. It properly consists in the supreme love of God, and fervent charity to all men. The christian also hath need of the assistance of others in his passage through this world, where he has so much opposition to encounter. Those who deserve this character, are said to be pilgrims and strangers in the earth. Therefore they ought to keep together, lest they lose their way. They comfort each other in distress, they assist each other in doubts and difficulty, they embolden each other by their example, and they assist each other by their prayers.

This is no less the case in respect to literature. It has been observed, that great and eminent men have generally, in every nation, appeared in clusters. The reason of this probably is, that their society and mutual intercourse greatly adds to their improvement, and gives force and vigour to the talents

which they may severally possess. Nothing is so powerful an incitement to diligence, or so kindles the best sort of ambition, as the friendship, advice, and assistance of men of learning and worth. The approbation of one such, is of more value to a noble mind, than peals of applause from an undiscerning multitude. Besides, the assistance which men of letters give to each other, is really necessary in the execution of particular works of great compass and utility. If it is by the labours of preceding ages, that it is now possible in one life to attain to such a degree of knowledge as we have sometimes seen, so it is by the concurrence of many friends lending their assistance, that one man has been sometimes able to present to the public, a system of science, which, without that aid, he alone would have in vain attempted to bring to perfection. There is no circumstance which throws this new country so far back in point of science, as the want of public libraries, where thorough researches might be made, and the small number of learned men to assist in making researches practicable, easy or complete.

III. The last head on which I promised to give you my advice, was prudence in your communication with the world in general, your outward provision and other circumstances that conduce to the happiness and comfort of life. On this subject, I begin with what I have often recommended to

you, frugality in the management of your affairs, order and exactness in your dress, furniture, books, and keeping of accounts. Nothing could be further from my mind than to recommend the temper or conduct of avaricious men, whose sordid souls have no higher ambition, and indeed, hardly any other desire than that of getting pelf. This is not only unbecoming a gentleman and a scholar, but, in my opinion, wholly inconsistent with the character. I never knew an instance of a person in whom this disposition took place in early life, that could apply to study, or that became eminent in any thing that was good. The opposite vice is the common fault of youth, and it is against this I would caution you. The frugality I would recommend, is that of an independent mind, that fears and scorns subjection to others, and remembers the just saying of Solomon, that *the borrower is servant to the lender*. That frugality which arises from order and economy, is not only consistent with, but it is the parent of liberality of sentiment and generosity of conduct. It is indeed the source of beneficence, for no man can bestow out of an empty purse. On the other hand, covetousness and profusion, are by no means repugnant to each other; and indeed they are more frequently joined than many apprehend. The stricture of Sallust in the character of Cataline, *alieni appetens sui profusus*, has been often cited and may gene-

rally be applied to loose and profligate livers. I hope therefore you will learn betimes to distinguish between the virtue and the vice, and to adhere to the one as much as you despise the other.

I will make an observation here, which may be applied not only to the distinction of character in this instance, but in almost every other that has been, or shall be mentioned. It will be much your interest, if you learn betimes to make not a hasty but a deliberate and candid judgment, when you infer character from appearances. The habits of life which men contract, give a bias to their opinions and even a tincture to their conversation and phraseology. Persons inclined to levity and dissipation, will often ascribe to covetousness, what arises from very different causes. I have known, even in youth, a person declining to engage in a party of pleasure, accused by his companions as mean and sneaking, and afraid of his purse, when in reality, it was not that he loved money more, but pleasure less. It may sometimes happen, that a person of principle, will see it proper to decline meetings of festivity, though not directly sinful, as an unnecessary waste of time, or from some other circumstance to him dangerous and ensnaring. I have also seen persons more advanced in years, who from a habit, perhaps a necessary habit of strict temperance, and retired manner of life, were very sparing

of personal expence, and even not much disposed to social intercourse, and therefore called close or covetous; and yet when applied to, for pious or charitable purposes, would be much more liberal than others of an opposite turn of mind. Observations perfectly similar might be made upon the opposite character of liberality. It is not every kind of openness of heart that indicates profusion. We are told by Solomon, Prov. xi. 25. "That the liberal soul shall be made fat," and by the prophet Isaiah, Isa. xxxii. 8. "That the liberal desireth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall be established." From these contrasted remarks, I infer, that as it is seldom necessary to judge peremptorily of others, so forbearance and the most charitable allowance, is both our duty and interest.

In the next place, I recommend to you, humility of heart, and meekness of carriage. I consider in this place, the grace of humility as a virtue especially serviceable to your earthly comfort. I consider and mean to treat it as a maxim of worldly prudence. The Scripture seems to point it out as peculiarly necessary for this purpose, and to annex the promise of earthly happiness to the practice of it: Matt. v. 5. "Blessed are the meek," says our Saviour, "for they shall inherit the earth." I would understand him as saying, every good man shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, but those who excel in

meekness, shall of all others have comfort on earth. In many different views, we may see the propriety of this connection. Nothing is more offensive to others, than a proud, assuming manner. It not only magnifies every fault, but vitiates even good conduct. It is not only odious to virtuous persons, but it is equally, if not more so, to those who are without principle. Some vices recommend a man to the vicious, in the same line, as one drunkard is pleased with the sight of another; but nothing is so hateful to a proud man, as another of the same character, nor is offence sooner given or taken than between those, who, in this respect, perfectly resemble one another. This vice is not only odious to persons of understanding and reflection, but to the most ignorant, being as easily perceived as it is universally hated.

The moral virtue of meekness and condescension, is the best ground work even of worldly politeness, and prepares a man to receive that polish, which makes his behaviour generally agreeable, and fits him for intercourse with persons in the higher ranks of life. The same virtue, by the composure and self-command that accompanies it, enables a man to manage his affairs to advantage, in whatever calling he may be engaged, or in whatever station he may be placed. A good shopkeeper is commonly remarkable for this quality. People love to go where they meet with good words and gentle treat-



ment ; whereas the peevish and petulant may be said to have a repelling quality about them, that will not suffer any body to approach them.

To complete the whole, meekness of spirit is as useful to man's self, as meekness of carriage is acceptable to others. The meek suffer much less from the unavoidable evils of life, than those of a contrary disposition. Many cross accidents of the less important kind, are in a manner annihilated when they are borne with calmness. The injury they do us, is not owing half so much to their weight or severity, as to the irritability of their own minds. It is evident that the same disposition must greatly alleviate calamities of a heavier kind ; and from analogy, you may perceive, that as it mitigates the sorrows, it multiplies and adds to the sweetness of the comforts of life. A moderate portion, gives greater satisfaction to the humble and thankful, than the most ample possessions to the proud and impatient.

Nearly allied to the above virtue, is the government of your passions, and therefore of this I shall say but little. Every one must be sensible how important it is, both for the success of your worldly callings, and your usefulness in public life, to have your passions in due subjection. Men of furious and ungoverned tempers, prone to excess in attachment and resentment, either as to persons or things, are seldom successful in their

pursuits, or respected and useful in their stations. Persons of uncontrolled passions, are almost always fickle and changeable in their measures, which is of all things the most fatal to important undertakings. These generally require time and patience to bring them to perfection. As to public and political life in particular, the necessity of self-government is so great, and so universally acknowledged, that it is usual to impute it in eminent men, not to principle, but to address and policy. It is commonly said, that politicians have no passions. Without inquiring into this, I shall only say, that whatever truth may be in it, is still in favour of my argument. The hypocrisy does honour to the virtue. If the appearance be so necessary or so useful, what must be the value of the reality?

I will here take an opportunity of confuting, or at least correcting a common saying or proverbial sentiment; many of which indeed, that obtain belief in a blinded world, are nothing but false colouring and deception. It is usual to say, in defence of sudden and violent passion, that it is better to speak freely and openly, than to harbour and cover secret heart malice. Perhaps I might admit that this would be true, if the inward rage were to be as violent, and continue as long, and return as often as indulged passion. Every person must agree, that wherever there is a deep and lasting hatred, that never

forgets nor forgives, but waits for the opportunity of vengeance, it deserves to be considered as a temper truly infernal. But in most instances of offence between man and man, to restrain the tongue is the way to govern the heart. If you do not make mention of an injury, you will truly and speedily forgive it, and perhaps literally forget it. Rage is in this respect like a fire, if a vent is given to it, it will increase and spread, while there is fuel to consume; but if you can confine and stifle it, you will completely extinguish it.

To the government of the passions, succeeds the government of the tongue. This indeed will in a great measure, be the effect of the former, and therefore is recommended by all the same arguments; yet it deserves very particular attention, separately, as a maxim of prudence. There are great indiscretions in speech, that do not arise from passion, but from inattention and want of judgment as to the propriety of time and place, and indeed many other sources. I would therefore earnestly recommend to you, to habituate yourselves to restraint in this respect, especially in the early part of life. "Be swift to hear," says St. James, "and slow to speak." Forwardness in speech is always thought an assuming thing in youth, and in promiscuous companies, is often considered as an insult, as well as an indiscretion. It is very common for the world in

general, and still more so for men of judgment and penetration, to form an opinion of a character on the whole, from some one circumstance, and I think there are few things more unfavourable in this way than a talkative disposition. If the first time I am in company, especially with a young man, he talks incessantly and takes the whole conversation to himself, I shall hardly be brought to have a good opinion of him, whether what he says be good or evil, sense or nonsense. There are some persons, who, one might say, give away so much wisdom in their speech, that they leave none behind to govern their actions.

But the chief danger of an ungoverned tongue, is, that it kindles the fire of contention among others, and makes enemies to a man's self. Solomon says, "Where no tale-bearer is, the strife ceaseth." A little experience will shew you, how unsafe it is to use much freedom in speech with absent persons. In that case you put yourself wholly in the power of those that hear you, and are in danger, not only from their treachery or malice, but from their mistakes, ignorance, and imprudence. Perhaps it would be too rigid to say, that you ought never to speak to a man's prejudice in his absence, what you would be unwilling to say in his presence. Some exceptions to this rule, might easily be conceived. But both prudence and candour require that you

should be very reserved in this respect, and either adhere strictly to the rule, or be sure that good reasons will justify a departure from it.

This will be a very proper place to give you some directions, as the most proper conduct, when you suffer from the tongues of others. Many and grievous are the complaints of what men suffer from the envenomed shafts of envy and malice. And there certainly is a strong disposition in some to invent, and in many to believe slanderous falsehoods. The prevalence of party, in religion or politics, never fails to produce a plentiful crop of this poisonous weed. One of the most important rules upon this subject is, that when an accusation is in any degree well-founded, or suspicious appearances have given any occasion for it, the first duty is to reform what is really wrong, and keep at a distance from the disputed limit.

This will bring good out of evil, and turn an injury into a benefit. But in cases, as it may often happen, when the slander is perfectly groundless, I hold it to be in general the best way wholly to despise it. Time and the power of truth, will of themselves do justice in almost every case of this kind; but if you shew an impatience under it, a disposition to resent it, or a solicitude to refute it, the far greatest part of mankind will believe it not the less, but the more. If slander were a plant or an animal, I would say it

was of a very strange nature, for that it would very easily die, but could not easily be killed. It discovers a greatness of mind, and a conscious dignity, to despise slanders, which of itself commands respect; whereas to be either offended or distressed by them, shews a weakness not amiable, whether the accusation be true or false.

This rule I do not say is wholly without exception. There may be cases where vindications may be necessary and effectual, but they are not many. And I think I have seen in the course of life, reason to make the following distinction. If the accusation or slander be special, and relate to a particular fact, fixed by time, place, and other circumstances, and if it be either wholly false, or essentially mistaken in its nature and tendency, the matter may be explained, and justice may be done. But if it be a general character, that happens to be imputed to a man, he ought to attempt no refutation of it, but by conduct: the more he complains of it, the more he speaks of it, the more he denies it, it will be the more believed. For example, if it be affirmed that a man spoke profanely in a certain company, at a certain place and time, when he was not present at all, it may be easily and completely refuted; but if he is accused of being proud, contentious, covetous, or deceitful, although these accusations are pretended to be supported by a train of facts, it is better to let them

wholly alone, and suffer his conduct to speak for itself. There are instances in history, of accusations brought with much plausibility, and urged with great vehemence; which yet have been either from the beginning disbelieved, or by time confuted; which occasioned the Latin proverb, *Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*

All the above-mentioned particulars may be said to be the happy effects of wisdom and benevolence united; or rather, perhaps, in the light in which they have been stated to you, they are chiefly the proper fruits of that wisdom which is "profitable to direct." But I must add another advice, which is the immediate effect of benevolence and good-will; that is, be ready to assist others, and do good as you have opportunity. As every thing is liable to be abused, sometimes the maxims of prudence take a wrong direction, and close the heart against impressions of sympathy and tenderness towards others in distress. Sometimes indeed, the coolness and composure of spirit, and that self-command, which is the effect of reflection and experience, is mistaken for a callous and unfeeling heart, though it is a very different thing. To give way to the agitation of passion, even under the finest feelings, is the way to prevent, instead of promoting usefulness. A parent, overwhelmed with surprise and anxiety, at a calamitous accident that has befallen a child, shall be incapable either of re-

fection or activity, and shall sometimes even need the assistance which he ought to give. But independently of this, there are certainly some persons who contract a habit of indifference as to the wants or desires of others, and are not willing to put themselves to any inconvenience, unless their own particular concerns may be promoted at the same time.

In opposition to this, I mean to recommend to you a disposition to oblige, not merely by civil expressions, and an affable deportment, but by taking a real interest in the affairs of others. Be not unwilling to lend your advice, your assistance, your interest, to those that need them. Those who cannot spare pecuniary assistance, may do many acts of valuable friendship. Let every neighbour perceive that you are not ready to quarrel needlessly, nor insist pertinaciously on trifles; and if you live to obtain credit and influence, let them be employed to assist the deserving of every class. If you undertake to do the business of others, attend to it with the same fidelity, and if possible, with greater punctuality than you would to your own. Some are ready to excuse or justify a contrary conduct, by complaining of the ingratitude or the injustice of mankind. But in my opinion, these complaints are contrary to truth and experience. There may be many particular persons both ungrateful and unjust; but in the world in general, there will be found a clearness of discernment, and an



exactness of retribution. Our Saviour tells us, with respect to one fault, that of rash judging, what is equally true, as to injuries of every kind, "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." Luke vi. 38.

This, in my opinion, may and ought to be understood both ways. As the churlish Nabal generally meets with his match, so persons of a humane and friendly disposition shall reap the fruits of it to them or theirs. The truth is, the disposition itself is not in its perfection, but when there is no regard to an immediate return. If you give, looking for a speedy recompence, it is not giving, but selling. You may, however, safely trust to the promise of God: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." Eccl. xi. 1.

I have known many instances of kindnesses that were both remembered and requited, after they had been long forgotten by him who bestowed them. Nay, sometimes they may be repaid in another generation. It is no inconsiderable legacy for a man to leave to his children, that he had always been a friend to others, and never refused his assistance to those who stood in need of it.

It will not be an improper place here to introduce a few words upon a subject, which

has been often handled by writers of the first class : I mean private friendship. Some writers against religion, have actually made it an objection against Christianity, that it does not recommend private friendship, or the love of our country. If this were true, it would be no fault, because the universal benevolence recommended by the gospel, includes all private affections, when they are consistent with it, and is far superior to them when they are contrary to it. But in fact, the instances of private friendship mentioned and alluded to in Scripture, are a sufficient recommendation of it ; and even our blessed Saviour himself is said to have distinguished the youngest of his disciples with particular affection. I will therefore observe, with most authors, that there is no true friendship, but what is founded upon virtuous principles, and directed to virtuous purposes. To love a person who is not worthy of love, is not a virtue, but an error. Neither is there any dependance to be placed, in trying cases, upon persons unprincipled at bottom. There never was a true friend, who was not an honest man. But besides this important truth, it is further to be observed, that there is a species of friendship which is neither founded on virtue nor vice, but mere weakness of mind. Some persons, having no resources in themselves, are obliged to have recourse to some other, upon whom they may lean, and without whom

they seem as if they could neither think, act, nor even exist. This sort of friendship is to be seen particularly in princes and persons of high rank, and is generally called favouritism ; but the same thing may be observed in all ranks, though in the lower, it is not so conspicuous. We may say of it, that it is like some of those plants that are false and spurious in their kind, which have some of the appearances, but want the most valuable and essential qualities of those that are genuine. Such friendships are commonly contracted by caprice or accident, and uncertain in their duration, being liable to be dissolved by the same means. Valuable friendship is the result of judgment as well as affection ; it is one of the greatest comforts of life as well as one of the greatest ornaments to human nature, and its genuineness may be discerned by the following mark : that though it is particular, it is not exclusive. When there is a great, but virtuous attachment to a person who deserves it, it will make a man not less, but more friendly to all others, as opportunity or circumstances shall call him to serve them.

You will perhaps be surprised that as I have so often expressed a desire of your being accomplished in every respect, that I have heretofore said nothing, or but little on that politeness and grace in behaviour, which is so much talked of, and which, in some late writings, has been so highly extolled.

What has been already explained to you, I hope will lay the foundation for the most solid, valuable and durable politeness. Think of others as reason and religion require you, and treat them as it is your duty to do, and you will not be far from a well-polished behaviour: As to any thing further, that is external in mode and propriety of carriage, it can never be learned but by intercourse with the best company. As to the writings above referred to, the chief of which are Rochefoucault's Maxims, and Chesterfield's letters. I think of them as of many other free writings, that when viewed properly, they may be as useful, as by being viewed otherwise, they are generally pernicious. They contain a digested system of hypocrisy, and betray such pride and self-sufficiency, and such hatred or contempt of mankind, as may well be an antidote against the poison which they mean to convey. Nay, one would think the publication of such sentiments is ridiculous, because it is telling you that they desire to be polite, and at the same time that this politeness consists in taking you by the weak side, and displaying their own address by over-reaching yours.

We must also observe, that such writers give in general, a very unjust as well as dishonourable view of nature and mankind. I remember, indeed, Dean Swift says,

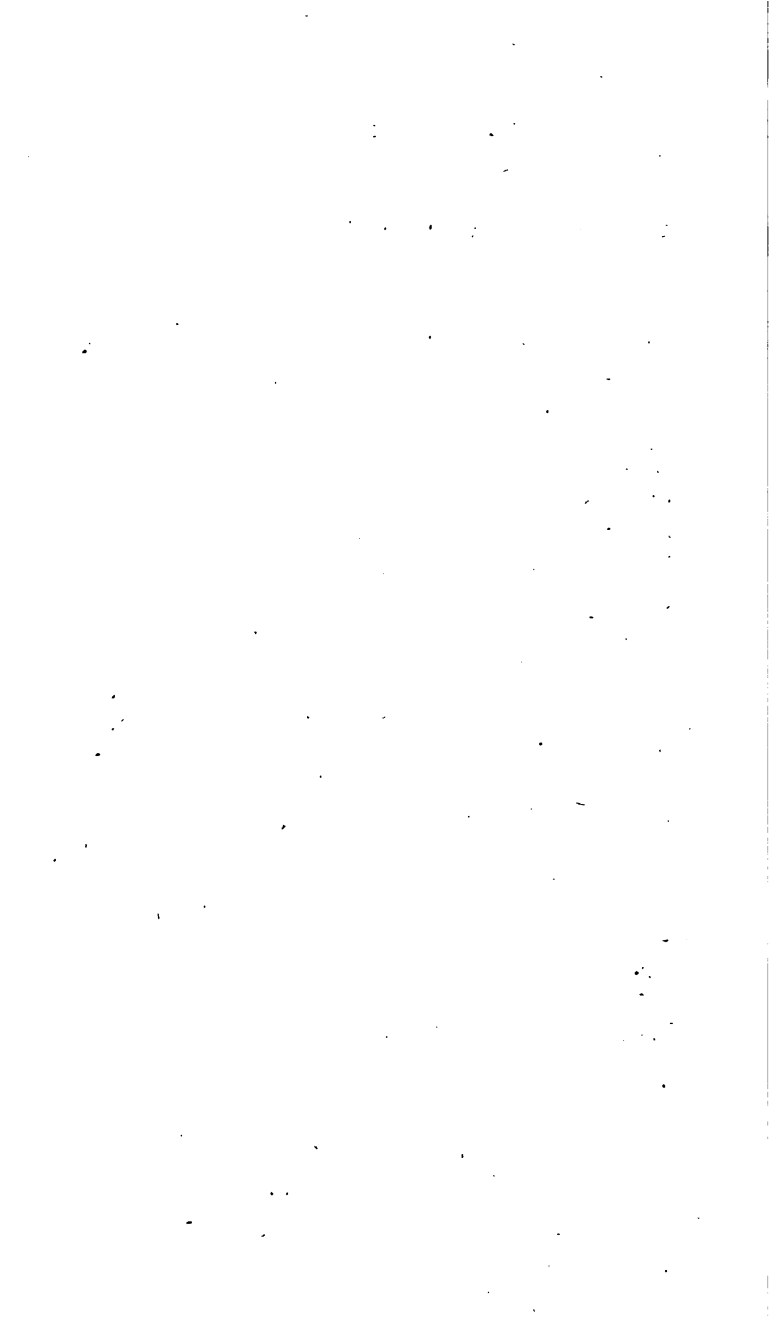
“ As Rochefoucault his maxims drew  
“ From nature, I believe them true.”

What must I say to this? Shall I say that he did not draw his maxims from nature? I will not, because I think he did. Am I obliged then to admit them to be true? By no means. It is nature, but it is just such a view of nature, as a man without principle must take. It is in himself, that all the error and exaggeration is to be found.

Those who discover an universal jealousy, and indiscriminate contempt for mankind in general, give very little reason to think well of themselves. Probably men are neither so good as they pretend, nor so bad as they are often thought to be. At any rate, candour in sentiment as well as conduct, as it is an important duty of religion, so it is a wise maxim for the conduct of life; and I believe these two things are very seldom if ever found either separate from, or opposed to each other.

The last advice that I shall offer you, is to preserve a sacred and inviolable regard to sincerity and truth. Those who have received their education here, or at least who have completed it, must know how much pains have been taken to establish the universal and unalterable obligation of truth. This is not however mentioned now to introduce the general subject, or to show the guilt, folly and danger of deliberate interested falsehood, but to warn you against the smaller breaches of truth now so very common, such as want of punctuality in appointments,

breach of promise in small matters, officious falsehoods, that is, deceiving children, sick persons or others for their good ; jocular deceptions, which are not intended to continue long, or be materially hurtful to others. Not one of these is without sin before God, and they are much more hurtful than is commonly supposed. So very sacred a thing indeed is truth, that the very shadow of departure from it is to be avoided. Suppose a man only to express his present purpose as to futurity, for example, to say he will go to such a place to-morrow, though there is no proper obligation given, nor any right to require performance, yet if he does so often, he will acquire the character of levity and unsteadiness, which will operate much to his disadvantage. Let me therefore recommend to you a strict, universal and scrupulous regard to truth—It will give dignity to your character—it will put order into your affairs ; it will excite the most unbounded confidence, so that whether your view be your own interest, or the service of others, it promises you the most assured success. I am also persuaded, that there is no virtue that has a more powerful influence upon every other, and certainly, there is none by which you can draw nearer to God himself, whose distinguishing character is, that he will not, and he cannot lie.



LETTERS  
ON  
EDUCATION.

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LETTER I.

**AFTER** so long a delay, I now set myself to fulfil my promise of writing to you a few thoughts on the education of children.— Though I cannot wholly purge myself of the crimes of laziness and procrastination, yet I do assure you, what contributed not a little to its being hitherto not done, was, that I considered it not as an ordinary letter, but what deserved to be carefully meditated on, and thoroughly digested. The concern you show on this subject, is highly commendable: for there is no part of your duty, as a Christian, or a citizen, which will be of greater service to the public, or a source of greater comfort to yourself.

The consequence of my thinking so long upon it, before committing my thoughts to paper, will probably be the taking the thing in a greater compass than either of us at first intended, and writing a series of letters, instead of one. With this view I begin with a preliminary to the successful education of children, viz. that husband and wife ought



to be entirely one upon this subject, not only agreed as to the end, but as to the means to be used, and the plan to be followed, in order to attain it. It ought to encourage you to proceed in your design, that I am persuaded you will not only meet with no opposition to a rational and serious education of your children, but great assistance from Mrs. S—— \* \* \* \* \*

The erased lines contained a compliment, written with great sincerity : but recollecting that there are no rules yet settled for distinguishing true compliment from flattery, I have blotted them out : on which, perhaps, you will say to yourself, “ he is fulfilling the character which his enemies give him, who say, it is the nature of the man to deal much more in satire, than in panegyric.” However, I content myself with repeating, that certainly husband and wife ought to conspire and co-operate in every thing relating to the education of their children ; and if their opinions happen, in any particular, to be different, they ought to examine and settle the matter privately by themselves, that not the least opposition may appear either to children or servants. When this is the case, every thing is enforced by a double authority, and recommended by a double example : but when it is otherwise, the pains taken are commonly more than lost, not being able to do any good, and certainly producing very much evil.

Be pleased to remember, that this is by no means intended against those unhappy couples, who, being essentially different in principles and character, live in a state of continual war. It is of little advantage to speak either to, or of such persons. But even differences incomparably smaller, are of very bad consequence: when one, for example, thinks a child may be carried out, and the other thinks it is wrong; when one thinks a way of speaking is dangerous, and the other is positive there is nothing in it. The things themselves may indeed be of little moment; but the want of concurrence in the parents, or the want of mutual esteem and deference, easily observed even by very young children, is of the greatest importance.

As you and I have chiefly in view the religious education of children, I take it to be an excellent preliminary, that parental affection should be purified by the principles, and controuled or directed by the precepts of religion. A parent should rejoice in his children, as they are the gift of a gracious God; should put his trust in the care of an indulgent Providence for the preservation of his offspring, as well as himself; should be supremely desirous that they may be, in due time, the heirs of eternal life; and, as he knows the absolute dependance of every creature upon the will of God, should be ready to resign them at what time his Creator shall

see proper to demand them. This happy qualification of parental tenderness, will have a powerful influence in preventing mistakes in the conduct of education. It will be the most powerful of all incitements to duty, and at the same time a restraint upon that natural fondness and indulgence, which, by a sort of fascination of fatality, makes parents often do or permit what their judgment condemns, and then excuse themselves by saying, that no doubt it is wrong, but truly they cannot help it.

Another preliminary to the proper education of children, is a firm persuasion of the benefit of it, and the probable, at least, if not certain success of it, when faithfully and prudently conducted. This puts an edge upon the spirit, and enables the christian not only to make some attempts, but to persevere with patience and diligence. I know not a common saying either more false or pernicious, than "that the children of good men are as bad as others." This saying carries in it a supposition, that whereas the force of education is confessed with respect to every other human character and accomplishment, it is of no consequence at all as to religion. This, I think, is contrary to daily experience. Where do we expect to find young persons piously disposed but in pious families? the exceptions, or rather appearances to the contrary, are easily accounted for, in more ways than one. Many persons appear to be reli-

gious, while they are not so in reality ; but are chiefly governed by the applause of men. Hence their visible conduct may be specious, or their public performances applauded, and yet their families be neglected.

It must also be acknowledged that some truly well disposed persons are extremely defective or imprudent in this part of their duty, and therefore it is no wonder that it should not succeed. This was plainly the case with Eli, whose sons we are told, made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. However, I must observe, if we allow such to be truly good men, we must at the same time confess that this was a great drawback upon their character ; and that they differed very much from the father of the faithful, who had this honourable testimony given him by God, I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they serve me. To this we may add, that the child of a good man, who is seen to follow dissolute courses, draws the attention of mankind more upon him, and is much more talked of, than any other person of the same character. Upon the whole, it is certainly of moment, that one who desires to educate his children in the fear of God, should do it in a humble persuasion, that if he was not defective in his own duty, he will not be denied the blessing of success. I could tell you some remarkable instances of parents who seemed to labour in vain for a

long time, and yet were so happy as to see a change at last; and of some children in whom even after the death of the parents, the seed which was early sown, and seemed to have been entirely smothered, has at last produced fruit. And indeed no less seems to follow from the promise, annexed to the command, train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Having laid down these preliminaries, I shall say a few things upon the preservation of the health of children. Perhaps you will think this belongs only to the physician: but though a physician ought to be employed to apply remedies in dangerous cases, any man, with a little reflection, may be allowed to form some judgment as to the ordinary means of their preservation; nay, I cannot help being of opinion, than any other man is fitter than a physician for this purpose. His thoughts are so constantly taken up with the rules of his art, that it is an hundred to one he will prescribe more methods and medicines than can be used with safety.

The fundamental rules for preserving the health of children, are cleanliness, liberty, and free air. By cleanliness, I do not mean keeping the outside of their clothes in a proper condition to be seen before company, nor hindering them from fouling their hands and feet, when they are capable of going

abroad, but keeping them dry in the night time, when young, and frequently washing their bodies with cold water, and other things of the same nature and tendency. The second rule is liberty. All persons young and old, love liberty; and as far as it does them no harm, it will certainly do them good. Many a free born subject is kept a slave for the first ten years of his life; and is so much handled and carried about by women in his infancy, that the limbs and other parts of his body, are frequently mishapen, and the whole very much weakened; besides, the spirits, when under confinement, are generally in a dull and languishing state. The best exercise in the world for children, is to let them romp and jump about, as soon as they are able, according to their own fancy. This in the country is best done in the fields; in a city a well aired room is better than being sent into the streets under the care of a servant, very few of whom are able so far to curb their own inclinations, as to let the children follow theirs, even where they may do it with safety. As to free air there is nothing more essentially necessary to the strength and growth of animals and plants. If a few plants of any kind are sown in a close confined place, they commonly grow up tall, small, and very weak. I have seen a bed of beans in a garden, under the shade of a hedge or tree, very long and slender, which brought to my mind a young family of

quality, trained up in a delicate manner, who if they grow at all, grow to length, but never to thickness. So universal is this, that I believe the body of a sturdy or well built make, is reckoned among them a coarse and vulgar thing.

There is one thing with regard to servants, that I would particularly recommend to your attention. All children are liable to accidents; these may happen unavoidably; but do generally arise from the carelessness of servants, and to this they are almost always attributed by parents. This disposes all servants, good or bad, to conceal them from the parents, when they can possibly do it. By this means, children often receive hurts in falls or otherwise, which if known in time, might be easily remedied, but not being known either prove fatal, or make them lame or deformed. A near relation of mine has a high shoulder and a distorted waist from this very cause. To prevent such accidents, it is necessary to take all pains possible to acquire the confidence of servants, to convince them of the necessity of concealing nothing. There are two dispositions in parents, which hinder the servants from making discoveries; the first is, when they are very passionate, and apt to storm and rage against their servants, for every real or supposed neglect. Such persons can never expect a confession, which must be followed by such terrible vengeance. The other is,

when they are tender-hearted, or timorous to excess, which makes them show themselves deeply affected or greatly terrified upon any little accident that befalls their children. In this case, the very best servants are unwilling to tell them, through fear of making them miserable. In such cases, therefore, I would advise parents, whatever may be their real opinions, to discover them as little as possible to their servants. Let them still inculcate this maxim, that there should be no secrets concerning children, kept from those most nearly interested in them. And that there may be no temptation to such conduct, let them always appear as cool and composed as possible, when any discovery is made, and be ready to forgive a real fault, in return for a candid acknowledgment.



## LETTER II.



IF I mistake not my last letter was concluded by some remarks on the means of trying servants to be careful of the safety of children, and ready to discover early and honestly, any accidents that might happen to befall them. I must make some farther remarks upon servants. It is a subject of great importance, and inseparably connected with what I have undertaken. You will find it extremely difficult to educate children properly, if the servants of the family do not conspire in it; and impossible, if they are inclined to hinder it. In such a case, the orders issued, or the method laid down, will be neglected, where that is possible and safe; where neglect is unsafe, they will be unsuccessfully or improperly executed, and many times, in the hearing of the children, they will be either laughed at, or complained of and disapproved. The certain consequence of this is, that children will insensibly come to look upon the directions and cautions of their parents, as unnecessary or unreasonable restraints. It is a known and very common way for servants to insinuate themselves into the affections of children, by granting them such indulgences as would

be refused them by their parents, as well as concealing the faults which ought to be punished by parents, and they are often very successful in training them up to a most dangerous fidelity in keeping the secret.

Such is the evil to be feared, which ought to have been more largely described: let us now come to the remedy. The foundation, to be sure, is to be very nice and careful in the choice of servants. This is commonly thought to be an extremely difficult matter, and we read frequently in public papers the heaviest complaints of bad servants. I am, however, one of those who think the fault is at least as often in the masters. Good servants may certainly be had, and do generally incline of themselves to be in good families, and when they find that they are so, do often continue very long in the same, without desiring to remove. You ought, therefore, to be exceedingly scrupulous, and not without an evident necessity, to hire any servant but who seems to be sober and pious. Indeed, I flatter myself, that a pious family is such, as none but one who is either a saint or a hypocrite will be supposed to continue in. If any symptoms of the last character appears, you need not be told what you ought to do.

The next thing, after the choice of servants, is to make conscience of doing your duty to them, by example, instruction, admonition and prayer. Your fidelity to them

will naturally produce in them fidelity to you and yours, and that upon the very best principles. It will excite in them a deep sense of gratitude, and at the same time fill them with sentiments of the highest and most unfeigned esteem. I could tell you of instances (you will however probably recollect some yourself) of servants who from their living comfortably, and receiving benefits in pious families, have preserved such a regard and attachment to their masters, as have been little short of idolatry. I shall just mention one—a worthy woman in this place, formerly servant to one of my predecessors, and married many years since to a thriving tradesman, continues to have such an undiminished regard to her master's memory, that she cannot speak of him without delight; keeps by her to this hour the newspaper which gives an account of his death and character, and, I believe, would not exchange it for a bill or bond, to a very considerable sum.

But the third and finishing direction with regard to servants, is to convince them, in a cool and dispassionate manner, of the reasonableness of your method of proceeding, that as it is dictated by conscience, it is conducted with prudence. Thence it is easy to represent to them that it is their duty, instead of hindering its success by opposition or negligence, to co-operate with it to the utmost of their power. It is not below

any man to reason in some cases with his servants. There is a way of speaking to them on such subjects, by which you will lose nothing of your dignity, but even corroborate your authority. While you manifest your firm resolution, never to depart from your right and title to command: you may, notwithstanding, at proper seasons, and by way of condescension, give such general reasons for your conduct, as to show that you are not acting by mere caprice or humor. Nay, even while you sometimes insist, that your command of itself shall be a law, and that you will not suffer it to be disputed, nor be obliged to give a reason for it, you may easily show them that this also is reasonable. They may be told that you have the greatest interest in the welfare of your children, the best opportunity of being apprised as to the means of prosecuting it, and that there may be many reasons for your orders which it is unnecessary or improper for them to know.

Do not think that all this is excessive refinement, chimerical or impossible. Servants are reasonable creatures, and are best governed by a mixture of authority and reason. They are generally delighted to find themselves treated as reasonable, and will sometimes discover a pride in showing that they understand, as well as find a pleasure in entering into your views. When they find, as they will every day by experience,

the success and benefit of a proper method of education, it will give them a high opinion of, and confidence in, your judgment; they will frequently consult you in their own affairs, as well as implicitly follow your directions in the management of yours. After all, the very highest instance of true greatness of mind, and the best support of your authority, when you see necessary to interpose it, is not to be opinionative or obstinate, but willing to acknowledge or remit a real mistake, if it is discreetly pointed out, even by those in the lowest stations. The application of these reflections will occur in several of the following branches of this subject.

The next thing I shall mention as necessary, in order to the education of children, is, to establish as soon as possible, an entire and absolute authority over them. This is a part of the subject which requires to be treated with great judgment and delicacy. I wish I may be able to do so. Opinions, like modes and fashions, change continually upon every point; neither is it easy to keep the just middle, without verging to one or the other of the extremes. On this, in particular, we have gone in this nation in general, from one extreme to the very utmost limits of the other. In the former age, both public and private, learned and religious education was carried on by mere dint of authority. This, to be sure, was a savage

and barbarous method, and was in many instances terrible and disgusting to the youth. Now, on the other hand, not only severity, but authority, is often decried; persuasion, and every soft and gentle method, is recommended in such terms, as plainly lead to a relaxation. I hope you will be convinced, that the middle way is best, when you find it is recommended by the Spirit of God in his word, Prov. xiii. 24. xix. 18. xxii. 15. You will also find a caution against excess in this matter, Col. ii. 21.

I have said above, that you should "establish as soon as possible, an entire and absolute authority." I would have it early, that it may be absolute; and absolute, that it may not be severe. If parents are too long in beginning to exert their authority, they will find the task very difficult. Children, habituated to indulgence for a few of their first years, are exceedingly impatient of restraint, and if they happen to be of stiff or obstinate tempers, can hardly be brought to an entire, at least to a quiet and placid submission; whereas, if they are taken in time, there is hardly any temper but what may be made to yield, and by early habit the subjection becomes quite easy to themselves.

The authority ought also to be absolute, that it may not be severe. The more complete and uniform a parent's authority is, the offences will be more rare, punishment will be less needed, and the more gentle kind of

correction will be abundantly sufficient. We see every where about us examples of this. A parent that has once obtained, and knows how to preserve authority, will do more by a look of displeasure, than another by the most passionate words and even blows. It holds universally in families and schools, and even the greater bodies of men, the army and navy; that those who keep the strictest discipline, gives the fewest strokes. I have frequently remarked that parents, even of the softest tempers, and who are famed for the greatest indulgence to their children; do, notwithstanding, correct them more frequently, and even more severely, though to very little purpose, than those who keep up their authority. The reason is plain. Children, by foolish indulgence, become often so froward and petulant in their tempers, that they provoke their easy parents past all endurance; so that they are obliged, if not to strike, at least to scold them, in a manner as little to their own credit, as their children's profit.

There is not a more disgusting sight than the impotent rage of a parent who has no authority. Among the lower ranks of people, who are under no restraint from decency, you may sometimes see a father or mother running out into the street after a child who is fled from them, with looks of fury and words of execration; and they are often stupid enough to imagine that neighbours or

passengers will approve them in this conduct, though in fact it fills every beholder with horror. There is a degree of the same fault to be seen in persons of better rank, though expressing itself somewhat differently. Ill words and altercations will often fall out between parents and children before company; a sure sign that there is a defect of government at home, or in private. The parent stung with shame at the misbehaviour or indiscretion of the child, desires to persuade the observers that it is not his fault, and thereby effectually convinces every person of reflection that it is.

I would therefore recommend to every parent, to begin the establishment of authority much more early than is commonly supposed to be possible: that is to say, from about the age of eight or nine months. You will perhaps smile at this; but I do assure you from experience, that by setting about it with prudence, deliberation, and attention, it may be in a manner completed by the age of twelve or fourteen months. Do not imagine, I mean to bid you use the rod at that age; on the contrary, I mean to prevent the use of it in a great measure, and to point out a way by which children of sweet and easy tempers, may be brought to such a habit of compliance, as never to need correction at all; and whatever their temper may be, so much less of this is sufficient, than upon any other supposition. This is one of my fa-



yourite schemes ; let me try to explain and recommend it.

Habits in general may be very early formed in children. An association of ideas is, as it were, the parent of habit. If then, you can accustom your children to perceive that your will must always prevail over theirs ; when they are opposed, the thing is done, and they will submit to it without difficulty or regret. To bring this about, as soon as they begin to show their inclination by desire or aversion, let single instances be chosen now and then (not too frequently) to contradict them. For example, if a child shows a desire to have any thing in his hand that he sees, or has any thing in his hand with which he is delighted, let the parent take it from him ; and when he does so, let no consideration whatever make him restore it at that time. Then at a considerable interval, perhaps a whole day is little enough, especially at first, let the same thing be repeated. In the mean time, it must be carefully observed, that no attempt should be made to contradict the child in the intervals. Not the least appearance of opposition, if possible, should be found between the will of the parent and that of the child, except in those chosen cases, when the parent must always prevail.

I think it necessary that those attempts should always be made, and repeated at proper intervals by the same person. It is also

better it should be by the father, than the mother or any female attendant, because they will be necessarily obliged in many cases to do things displeasing to the child, as in dressing, washing, &c. which spoil the operation: neither is it necessary that they should interpose, for when once a full authority is established in one person, it can easily be communicated to others, as far as is proper. Remember, however, that mother or nurse should never presume to condole with the child, or show any signs of displeasure at his being crossed; but on the contrary, give every mark of approbation, and of their own submission, to the same person.

This experiment frequently repeated, will in a little time so perfectly habituate the child to yield to the parent whenever he interposes, that he will make no opposition. I can assure you from experience, having literally practised this method myself, that I never had a child of twelve months old, but who would suffer me to take any thing from him or her, without the least mark of anger or dissatisfaction; while they would not suffer any other to do so, without the bitterest complaints. You will easily perceive how this is to be extended gradually and universally, from one thing to another, from contradicting to commanding them. But this, and several other remarks upon establishing and preserving authority, must be referred to another letter.

## LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

THE theory laid down in my last letter, for establishing an early and absolute authority over children, is of much greater moment than, perhaps, you will immediately apprehend. There is a great diversity in the temper and disposition of children; and no less in the penetration, prudence and resolution of parents. From all these circumstances, difficulties arise, which increase very fast as the work is delayed. Some children have naturally very stiff and obstinate tempers, and some have a certain pride, or if you please, greatness of mind, which makes them think it a mean thing to yield. This disposition is often greatly strengthened in those of high birth, by the ideas of their own dignity and importance instilled into them from their mother's milk. I have known a boy not six years of age, who made it a point of honour not to cry when he was beat even by his parents. Other children have so strong passions, or so great sensibility, that if they receive correction, they will cry immoderately, and either be, or seem to be, affected to such a degree, as to endanger their health or life. Neither is it uncommon for the pa-

rents in such a case to give up the point, and if they do not ask pardon, at least they give very genuine marks of repentance and sorrow for what they have done.

I have said this is not uncommon, but I may rather ask you whether you know any parents at all, who have so much prudence and firmness as not to be discouraged in the one case, or to relent on the other? At the same time it must always be remembered, that the correction is wholly lost which does not produce absolute submission. Perhaps I may say it is more than lost, because it will irritate instead of reforming them, and will instruct or perfect them in the art of overcoming their parents, which they will not fail to manifest on a future opportunity. It is surprising to think how early children will discover the weak side of their parents, and what ingenuity they will show in obtaining their favour or avoiding their displeasure. I think I have observed a child in treaty or expostulation with a parent, discover more consummate policy at seven years of age, than the parent himself, even when attempting to cajole him with artful evasions and specious promises. On all these accounts, it must be a vast advantage that a habit of submission should be brought on so early, that even memory itself shall not be able to reach back to its beginning. Unless this is done, there are many cases, in which, after the best management, the authority will be

imperfect ; and some in which any thing that deserves that name will be impossible. There are some families, not contemptible either in station or character, in which the parents are literally and properly obedient to their children, are forced to do things against their will, and chidden if they discover the least backwardness to comply. If you know none such, I am sure I do.

Let us now proceed to the best means of preserving authority, and the way in which it ought to be daily exercised. I will trace this to its very source. Whatever authority you exercise over either children or servants, or as a magistrate over other citizens, it ought to be dictated by conscience, and directed by a sense of duty. Passion or resentment ought to have as little place as possible ; or rather, to speak properly, though few can boast of having arrived at full perfection, it ought to have no place at all. Reproof or correction given in a rage, is always considered by him to whom it is administered, as the effect of weakness in you, and therefore the demerit of the offence will be either wholly denied or soon forgotten. I have heard some parents often say, that they cannot correct their children unless they are angry ; to whom I have usually answered, then you ought not to correct them at all. Every one would be sensible, that for a magistrate to discover an intemperate rage in pronouncing sentence against a criminal,

would be highly indecent. Ought not parents to punish their children in the same dispassionate manner? Ought they not to be at least equally concerned to discharge their duty in the best manner, one case as in the other?

He who would preserve his authority over his children, should be particularly watchful of his own conduct. You may as well pretend to force people to love what is not amiable, as to reverence what is not respectable. A decency of conduct, therefore, and dignity of deportment, is highly serviceable for the purpose we have now in view. Lest this, however, should be mistaken, I must put in a caution, that I do not mean to recommend keeping children at too great a distance by a uniform sternness and severity of carriage. This, I think, is not necessary, even when they are young; and it may, to children of some tempers, be very hurtful when they are old. By and by, you shall receive from me a quite contrary direction. But by dignity of carriage, I mean parents showing themselves always cool and reasonable in their own conduct; prudent and cautious in their conversation with regard to the rest of mankind; not fretful or impatient, or passionately fond of their own peculiarities; and though gentle and affectionate to their children, yet avoiding levity in their presence. This, probably, is the meaning of the precept of the ancients, *maxima debetur pueris reverentia*.

I would have them cheerful, yet serene. In short, I would have their familiarity to be evidently an act of condescension. Believe it, my dear sir, that which begets esteem, will not fail to produce subjection.

That this may not be carried too far, I would recommend every expression of affection and kindness to children when it is safe, that is to say, when their behaviour is such as to deserve it. There is no opposition at all between parental tenderness and parental authority. They are the best supports to each other. It is not only lawful, but will be of service that parents should discover the greatest fondness for children in infancy, and make them perceive distinctly with how much pleasure they gratify all their innocent inclinations. This, however, must always be done when they are quiet, gentle, and submissive in their carriage. Some have found fault with giving them, for doing well, little rewards of sweetmeats and playthings, as tending to make them mercenary, and leading them to look upon the indulgence of appetite as the chief good. This I apprehend, is rather refining too much: the great point is, that they be rewarded for doing good, and not for doing evil. When they are cross and froward, I would never buy peace, but force it. Nothing can be more weak and foolish, or more destructive of authority, than when children are noisy and in an ill humour, to give them or promise them

something to appease them. When the Roman emperors began to give pensions and subsidies to the Northern nations to keep them quiet, a man might have foreseen without the spirit of prophecy, who would be master in a little time. The case is exactly the same with children. They will soon avail themselves of this easiness in their parents, command favours instead of begging them, and be insolent when they should be grateful.

The same conduct ought to be uniformly preserved as children advance in years and understanding. Let parents try to convince them how much they have their real interest at heart. Sometimes children will make a request, and receive a hasty or froward denial: yet upon reflection the thing appears not to be unreasonable, and finally it is granted; and whether it be right or wrong, sometimes by the force of importunity, it is extorted. If parents expect either gratitude or submission for favours so ungraciously bestowed, they will find themselves egregiously mistaken. It is their duty to prosecute, and it ought to be their comfort to see, the happiness of their children; and therefore they ought to lay it down as a rule, never to give a sudden or hasty refusal; but when any thing is proposed to them, consider deliberately and fully whether it is proper—and after that, either grant it cheerfully, or deny it firmly.



It is a noble support of authority, when it is really and visibly directed to the most important end. My meaning in this, I hope, is not obscure. The end I consider as most important is, the glory of God in the eternal happiness and salvation of children. Whoever believes in a future state, whoever has a just sense of the importance of eternity to himself, cannot fail to have a like concern for his offspring. This should be his end both in instruction and government; and when it visibly appears that he is under the constraint of conscience, and that either reproof or correction are the fruit of sanctified love, it will give them irresistible force. I will tell you here, with all the simplicity necessary in such a situation, what I have often said in my course of pastoral visitation in families, where there is in many cases, through want of judgment, as well as want of principle, a great neglect of authority. "Use your authority for God, and he will support it. Let it always be seen that you are more displeased at sin than at folly. What a shame is it, that if a child shall, through the inattention and levity of youth, break a dish or a pane of the window, by which you may lose the value of a few pence; you should storm and rage at him with the utmost fury, or perhaps beat him with unmerciful severity; but if he tells a lie, or takes the name of God in vain, or quarrels with his neighbours, he shall easily obtain pardon: or perhaps, if he

is reproved by others, you will justify him, and take his part."

You cannot easily believe the weight that it gives to family authority, when it appears visibly to proceed from a sense of duty, and to be itself an act of obedience to God. This will produce coolness and composure in the manner; it will direct and enable a parent to mix every expression of heart-felt tenderness, with the most severe and needful reproofs. It will make it quite consistent to affirm, that the rod itself is an evidence of love, and that it is true of every pious parent on earth, what is said of our Father in heaven—"Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." With this maxim in your eye, I would recommend, that solemnity take the place of, and be substituted for severity. When a child, for example, discovers a very depraved disposition, instead of multiplying stripes in proportion to the reiterated provocations, every circumstance should be introduced, whether in reproof or punishment, that can either discover the seriousness of your mind, or make an impression of awe and reverence upon his. The time may be fixed before hand—at some distance—the Lord's day—his own

birth-day—with many other circumstances that may be so special that it is impossible to enumerate them. I shall just repeat what you have heard often from me in conversation, that several pious persons made it an invariable custom, as soon as their children could read, never to correct them, but after they had read over all the passages of Scripture which command it, and generally accompanied it with prayer to God for his blessing. I know well with what ridicule this would be treated by many, if publicly mentioned; but that does not shake my judgment in the least, being fully convinced it is a most excellent method, and that it is impossible to blot from the minds of children, while they live upon earth, the impressions that are made by these means, or to abate the veneration they will retain for the parents who acted such a part.

Suffer me here to observe to you, that such a plan as the above requires judgment, reflection, and great attention in your whole conduct. Take heed that there be nothing admitted in the intervals that counteract it. Nothing is more destructive of authority, than frequent disputes and chiding upon small matters. This is often more irksome to children than parents are aware of. It weakens their influence insensibly, and in time makes their opinion and judgment of little weight, if not wholly contemptible. As before I recommended dignity in your ge-

neral conduct, so in a particular manner, let the utmost care be taken not to render authority cheap, by too often interposing it. There is really too great a risk to be run in every such instance. If parents will be deciding directly, and censuring every moment, it is to be supposed they will be sometimes wrong; and when this evidently appears, it will take away from the credit of their opinion, and weaken their influence, even where it ought to prevail.

Upon the whole, to encourage you to choose a wise plan, and to adhere to it with firmness, I can venture to assure you, that there is no doubt of your success. To subdue a youth after he has been long accustomed to indulgence, I take to be in all cases difficult, and in many impossible; but while the body is tender, to bring the mind to submission, to train up a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, I know is not impossible: and he who hath given the command, can scarcely fail to follow it with his blessing.

## LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING now finished what I proposed to say on the means of establishing and preserving authority, I shall proceed to another very important branch of the subject, and beg your very particular attention to it, viz. Example. Do not, however, suppose that I mean to enter on that most beaten of all topics, the influence of example in general, or to write a dissertation on the common saying, that "example teaches better than precept." An able writer, doubtless, might set even this in some new lights, and make it a strong argument with every good man to pay the strictest attention to his visible conduct. What we see every day has a constant and powerful influence on our temper and carriage. Hence arise national characters, and national manners, and every characteristic distinction of age and place. But of this I have already said enough.

Neither is it my purpose to put you in mind of the importance of example to enforce instruction, or of the shamefulness of a man's pretending to teach others what he despises himself. This ought in the strongest manner to be laid before pastors and other

public persons, who often defeat habitually by their lives, what they attempt to do occasionally in the execution of their office. If there remains the least suspicion of your being of that character, these letters would have been quite in another strain. I believe there are some persons of very irregular lives, who have so much natural light in their consciences, that they would be grieved or perhaps offended, if their children should tread exactly in their own steps: but even these, and much less others, who are more hardened, can never be expected to undertake or carry on the system of education, we are now endeavouring to illustrate. Suffer me, however, before I proceed, to make one remark: when I have heard of parents who have been watched by their own children, when drunk, and taken care of, lest they should meet with injury or hurtful accidents—or whose intemperate rage and horrid blasphemies, have, without scruple, been exposed both to children and servants—or who, as has sometimes been the case, were scarcely at the pains to conceal their criminal amours, even from their own offspring—I have often reflected on the degree of impiety of principle, or searedness of conscience, or both united, necessary to support them in such circumstances. Let us leave all such with a mixture of pity and disdain.

By mentioning example, therefore, as an important and necessary branch of the edu-

cation of children, I have chiefly in view a great number of particulars, which, separately taken, are, or at least are supposed to be, of little moment; yet by their union or frequent repetition, produce important and lasting effects. I have also in view to include all that class of actions, in which there is, or may be a coincidence between the duties of piety and politeness, and by means of which, the one is incorporated with the other. These are to be introduced under the head of example, because they will appear there to best advantage, and because many of them can hardly be taught or understood in any other way.

This, I apprehend, you will readily approve of, because, though you justly consider religion as the most essentially necessary qualification, you mean at the same time that your children should be fitted for an appearance becoming their station in the world. It is also the more necessary, as many are apt to disjoin wholly the ideas of piety and politeness, and to suppose them not only distinct, but incompatible. This is a dangerous snare to many parents, who think there is no medium between the grossest rusticity, and giving way to all the vanity and extravagance of a dissipated life. Persons truly pious have often by their conduct given countenance to this mistake. By a certain narrowness of sentiment and behaviour they have become themselves, and rendered their

children, unfit for a general intercourse with mankind, or the public duties of an active life.

You know, Sir, as much as any man, how contrary my opinion and conduct have been upon this subject. I cannot help thinking that true religion is not only consistent with, but necessary to the perfection of true politeness. There is a noble sentiment to this purpose illustrated at considerable length in the Port-royal Essays, viz. "That worldly politeness is no more than an imitation or imperfect copy of christian charity, being the pretence or outward appearance, of that deference to the judgment, and attention to the interest of others, which a true christian has as the rule of his life, and the disposition of his heart."\* I have at present in my mind the idea of certain persons, whom you will easily guess at, of the first quality; one or two of the male, and twice that number at least of the female sex, in whom piety and high station are united. What a sweetness and complacency of countenance, what a condescension and gentleness of manners, arising from the humility of the gospel being

\* The authors of these essays, commonly called by writers who make mention of them, the gentlemen of Port-Royal, were a society of Jansenists in France, who used to meet at that place; all of whom were eminent for literature, and many of them of high rank, as will be evident by mentioning the names of Pascal, Arnaud, and the prince of Conti. The last was the author of the essay from which the above remark is taken.



joined to the refined elegance inseparable from their circumstances in life !

Be pleaséd to follow me to the other extreme of human society. Let us go to the remotest cottage of the wildest country, and visit the family that inhabits it. If they are pious, there is a certain humanity and good will attending their simplicity, which makes it highly agreeable. There is also a decency in their sentiments, which, flowing from the dictates of conscience, is as pleasing in all respects as the restraint imposed by the rules of good-breeding, with which the persons here in view have little opportunity of being acquainted. On the contrary, unbred country people, when without principle, have generally a savageness and brutality in their carriage, as contrary to good manners as to piety itself. No one has a better opportunity of making observations of this kind, than I have from my office and situation, and I can assure you, that religion is the great polisher of the common people. It even enlarges their understanding as to other things. Having been accustomed to exercise their judgment and reflection on religious subjects, they are capable of talking more sensibly on agriculture, politics, or any common topic of indifferent conversation.

Let me not forget to speak of the middle ranks of life. Here, also, I scruple not to affirm, that whatever sphere a man has been bred in, or attained to, religion is not an in-

jury but an addition to the politeness of his carriage. They seem indeed to confess their relation to one another, by their reciprocal influence. In promiscuous conversation, as true religion contributes to make men decent or courteous, so true politeness guards them effectually from any outrage against piety or purity. If I were unhappily thrown into mixed or dangerous company, I should not apprehend any thing improper for me to hear from the most wicked man, but from the greatest clown. I have known gentlemen who were infidels in principle, and whose lives, I had reason to believe, were privately very bad; yet in conversation they were guarded, decent and improving; whereas if there come into company a rough unpolished country gentleman, no man can promise that he will not break out into some profane exclamation or obscene allusion, which it would be wrong to attribute to impiety, so much as to rudeness and want of reflection.

I have been already too long in the introduction, and in giving the reasons for what I propose shall make a part of this branch of the subject, and yet I must make another preliminary remark: there is the greater necessity for uniting piety and politeness in the system of family example, that as piety is by that means inculcated with the greatest advantage, so politeness can scarcely be attained in any other way. It is very rare that persons

reach a higher degree of politeness, than what they have been formed to in the families of their parents and other near relations. True politeness does not consist in dress, or a few motions of the body, but in a habit of sentiment and conversation: the first may be learned from a master, and in a little time; the last only by a long and constant intercourse with those who possess, and are therefore able to impart it. As the difficulty is certainly greatest with the female sex, because they have fewer opportunities of being abroad in the world, I shall take an example from among them.

Suppose a man of low birth living in the country, by industry and parsimony has become wealthy, and has a daughter to whom he desires to give a genteel education. He sends her to your city to a boarding school, for the other which is nearer me, you are pleased not to think sufficient for that purpose. She will speedily learn to buy expensive and fashionable clothes, and most probably be in the very height and extravagance of the fashion, one of the surest signs of a vulgar taste. She may also, if her capacity is tolerable, get rid of her rustic air and carriage; and if it be better than ordinary, learn to discourse upon whatever topic is then in vogue; and comes in immediately after the weather, which is the beginning of all conversation. But as her residence is only for a time, she returns home; where she

can see or hear nothing but as before. Must she not relapse speedily in the same vulgarity of sentiment, and perhaps the same provincial dialect, to which she had been accustomed from her youth? Neither is it impossible that she may just retain as much of the city ceremonial, as by the incongruous mixture, will render her ridiculous. There is but one single way of escape, which we have seen some young women of merit and capacity take; which is to contract an intimacy with persons of liberal sentiments and higher breeding, and be as little among their relations as possible. I have given this description to convince you, that it is in their father's house, and by the conversation and manners to which they are there accustomed, that children must be formed to politeness, as well as to virtue. I carry this matter so far, that I think it a disadvantage to be bred too high, as well as too low. I do not desire, and have always declined any opportunity given me of having my children reside long in families of high rank. I was afraid they would contract an air and manner unsuitable, to what was to be their condition for the remainder of their lives. I would wish to give my children as just, as noble, and as elegant sentiments as possible, to fit them for rational conversation, but a dress and carriage suited to their station, and not inconsistent with the meekness of the gospel.

Though the length of this digression, or

explanatory introduction, has made it impossible to say much in this letter on forming children's character and manners by example; before I conclude, I will give one direction which is pretty comprehensive. Give the utmost attention to the manner of receiving and entertaining strangers in your family, as well as to your sentiments and expressions with regard to them when they are gone. I am fully persuaded, that the plainest and shortest road to real politeness of carriage, and the most amiable sort of hospitality is, to think of others just as a christian ought, and to express these thoughts with modesty and candour. This will keep you at an equal distance from a surley and morose carriage on the one hand, and a fawning cringing obsequiousness; or unnecessary compliment and ceremony on the other. As these are circumstances to which children in early life are very attentive, and which occur constantly in their presence, it is of much moment what sentiments they imbibe from the behaviour of their parents. I do not mean only their learning from them an ease and dignity of carriage, or the contrary; but also, some moral or immoral habits of the last consequence. If they perceive you happy and lifted up with the visit or countenance of persons of high rank, solicitous to entertain them properly, submissive and flattering in your manner of speaking to them, vain and apt to boast of your connection with

them : and if, on the contrary, they perceive you hardly civil to persons of inferior stations, or narrow circumstances, impatient of their company, and immediately seizing the opportunity of their departure to despise or expose them ; will not this naturally lead the young mind to consider riches and high station, as the great sources of earthly happiness ? Will it not give a strong bias to their whole desires and studies, as well as visibly effect their behaviour to others in social life ? Do not think that this is too nice and refined : the first impressions upon young persons, though inconsiderable in themselves, have often a great as well as a lasting effect.

I remember to have read many years ago, in the archbishop of Cambray's education of a daughter, an advice to parents to let their children perceive that they esteem others, not according to their station or outward splendour, but their virtue and real worth. It must be acknowledged that there are some marks of respect due to men, according to their place in civil life, which a good man would not fail to give them, even for conscience sake. But it is an easy matter, in perfect consistency with this, by more frequent voluntary intercourse, as well as by our usual manner of speaking, to pay that homage which is due to piety, to express our contempt or indignation at vice, or meanness of every kind. I think it no inconsiderable addition to this remark, that we should

be as cautious of estimating *happiness* as *virtue* by outward station; and keep at the same distance from envying as from flattering the great.

But what I must particularly recommend to you, is to avoid that common, but detestable custom of receiving persons with courtesy, and all the marks of real friendship in your house; and the moment they are gone, falling upon their character and conduct with unmerciful severity. I am sensible there are some cases, though they are not numerous, in which it may be lawful to say of others behind their back, what it would be at least imprudent or unsafe to say in their own presence. Neither would I exclude parents from the advantage of pointing out to their children the mistakes and vices of others, as a warning or lesson of instruction to themselves. Yet as detraction in general is to be avoided at all times; so of all others the most improper season to speak to any man's prejudice, is, after you have just received and treated him in an hospitable manner, as a friend. There is something mean in it, and something so nearly allied to hypocrisy and disingenuity, that I would not choose to act such a part even to those whom I would take another opportunity of pointing out to my children, as persons whose conversation they should avoid, and whose conduct they should abhor.

In every station, and among all ranks, this

rule is often transgressed ; but there is one point in which it is more frequently and more universally transgressed than in any other, and that is by turning the absent into ridicule, for any thing odd or awkward in their behaviour. I am sorry to say that this is an indecorum that prevails in several families of high rank. A man of inferior station, for some particular reason is admitted to their company. He is perhaps not well acquainted with the rules of politeness, and the presence of his superiors, to which he is unaccustomed, increases his embarrassment. Immediately on his departure, a petulant boy or giddy girl will set about mimicking his motions and repeating his phrases, to the great entertainment of the company, who apparently derive much self-satisfaction from a circumstance in which there is no merit at all. If any person renders himself justly ridiculous, by affecting a character which he is unable to sustain, let him be treated with the contempt he deserves. - But there is something very ungenerous in people treating their inferiors with disdain, merely because the same Providence that made their ancestors great, left the others in a lower sphere.

It has often given me great indignation to see a gentleman or his wife, of real worth, good understanding, but simple manners, despised and ridiculed for a defect which they could not remedy, and that often by persons the most insignificant and frivolous,



who never uttered a sentence in their lives that deserved to be remembered or repeated. But if this conduct is ungenerous in the great, how diverting is it to see the same disposition carried down through all the inferior ranks, and showing itself in a silly triumph of every class over those who are supposed to be below them? I have known many persons, whose station was not superior to mine, take great pleasure in expressing their contempt of *vulgar ideas* and *low life*; and even a tradesman's wife in a city, glorying over the unpolished manners of her country acquaintance.

Upon the whole, as there is no disposition to which young persons are more prone than derision, or, as the author I cited above, Mr. Fenelon, expresses it, *un esprit mocquer et malin*—and few that parents are more apt to cherish—under the idea of its being a sign of sprightliness and vivacity—there is none which a pious and prudent parent should take greater care to restrain by admonition, and destroy by a contrary example.

## LETTER V.



DEAR SIR,

LET us now proceed to consider more fully, what it is to form children to piety by example. This is a subject of great extent, and, perhaps, of difficulty. The difficulty, however, does not consist either in the abstruseness of the arguments, or uncertainty of the facts upon which they are founded, but in the minuteness or trifling nature of the circumstances, taken separately, which makes them often either wholly unnoticed or greatly undervalued. It is a subject, which, if I mistake not, is much more easily conceived than explained. If you have it constantly in your mind, that your whole visible deportment will powerfully, though insensibly, influence the opinions and future conduct of your children, it will give a form or colour, if I may speak so, to every thing you say or do. There are numberless and nameless instances in which this reflection will make you speak, or refrain from speaking, act, or abstain from, some circumstances of action, in what you are engaged in; nor will this be accompanied with any reluctance in the one case, or constraint in the other.

But I must not content myself with this.

My profession gives me many opportunities of observing, that the impression made by general truths, however justly stated or fully proved, is seldom strong or lasting. Let me, therefore descend to practice, and illustrate what I have said by examples. Here again a difficulty occurs. If I give a particular instance it will perhaps operate no farther than recommending a like conduct in circumstances the same, or perhaps perfectly similar. For example. I might say, in speaking to the disadvantage of absent persons, I beseech you never fail to add the reason why you take such liberty, and indeed never take that liberty at all, but when it can be justified upon the principles of prudence, candour, and charity. A thing may be right in itself, but children should be made to see why it is right. This is one instance of exemplary caution, but if I were to add a dozen more to it, they would only be detached precepts; whereas I am anxious to take in the whole extent of edifying example. In order to this, let me range or divide what I have to say, under distinct heads. A parent who wishes that his example should be a speaking lesson to his children, should order it so as to convince them, that he considers religion as necessary, respectable, amiable, profitable, and delightful. I am sensible, that some of these characters may seem so nearly allied, as scarcely to admit of a distinction. Many parts of a virtuous con-

duct fall under more than one of these denominations. Some actions perhaps deserve all the epithets here mentioned, without exception and without prejudice one of another. But the distinctions seems to me very useful, for there is certainly a class of actions which may be said to belong peculiarly, or at least eminently, to each of these different heads. By taking them separately, therefore, it will serve to point out more fully the extent of your duty, and to suggest it when it would not otherwise occur, as well as to set the obligation to it in the stronger light.

1. You should, in your general deportment, make your children perceive that you look upon religion as absolutely necessary. I place this first, because it appears to me first both in point of order and force. I am far from being against taking all pains to show that religion is rational and honourable in itself, and vice the contrary; but I despise the foolish refinement of those, who, through fear of making children mercenary, are for being very sparing of the mention of heaven or hell. Such conduct is apt to make them conceive, that a neglect of their duty is only falling short of a degree of honour and advantage, which, for the gratification of their passions, they are very willing to relinquish. Many parents are much more ready to tell their children such or such a thing is mean, and not like a gentleman, than to warn them that they will thereby incur the displeasure

of their Maker. But when the practices are really and deeply criminal, as in swearing and lying, it is quite improper to rest the matter there. I admit that they are both mean, and that justice ought to be done to them in this respect; but I contend that it should only be a secondary consideration.

Let not human reasonings be put in the balance with divine wisdom. The care of our souls is represented in Scripture as the one thing needful. He makes a miserable bargain, who gains the whole world and loses his own soul. It is not the native beauty of virtue, or the outward credit of it, or the inward satisfaction arising from it, or even all these combined together, that will be sufficient to change our natures and govern our conduct; but a deep conviction, that unless we are reconciled to God, we shall without doubt perish everlastingly.

You will say, this is very true and very fit for a pulpit—but what is that class of actions that should impress it habitually on the minds of children? perhaps you will even say, what one action will any good man be guilty of—much more habitual conduct—that can tend to weaken their belief of it? This is the very point which I mean to explain. It is certainly possible that a man may at stated times give out that he looks upon religion to be absolutely necessary, and yet his conduct in many particulars may have no tendency to impress this on the minds of his

children. If he suffers particular religious duties to be easily displaced, to be shortened, postponed or omitted, upon the most trifling accounts, depend upon it, this will make religion in general seem less necessary, to those who observe it. If an unpleasant day will keep a man from public worship, when perhaps a hurricane will not keep him from an election meeting—if he chooses to take physic, or give it to his children on the Lord's day, when it could be done with equal ease on the day before or after—if he will more readily allow his servants to pay a visit to their friends on that day than any other, though he has reason to believe they will spend it in junketing and idleness—it will not be easy to avoid suspecting that worldly advantage is what determines his choice.

Take an example or two more on this head. Supposing a man usually to worship God in his family; if he sometimes omits it—if he allow every little business to interfere with it—if company will make him dispense with it, or shift it from its proper season—believe me, the idea of religion being every man's first and great concern, it is in a good measure weakened, if not wholly lost. It is a very nice thing in religion to know the real connection between, and the proper mixture of spirit and form. The form without the spirit is good for nothing; but on the other hand, the spirit without the form,

never yet existed. I am of opinion; that punctual and even scrupulous regularity in all those duties that occur periodically, is the way to make them easy and pleasant to those who attend them. They also become, like all other habits, in some degree necessary; so that those who have been long accustomed to them, feel an uneasiness in families where they are generally or frequently neglected. I cannot help also mentioning to you, the great danger of paying and receiving visits on the Lord's day, unless when it is absolutely necessary. It is a matter not merely difficult, but wholly impracticable, in such cases, to guard effectually against improper subjects of conversation. Nor is this all, for let the conversation be what it will, I contend that the duties of the family and the closet are fully sufficient to employ the whole time; which must therefore be wasted or misapplied by the intercourse of strangers.

I only further observe, that I know no circumstance from which your opinion of the necessity of religion will appear with the greater clearness, or carry it in greater force, than your behaviour towards and treatment of your children in time of dangerous sickness. Certainly there is no time in their whole lives when the necessity appears more urgent, or the opportunity more favourable, for impressing their minds with a sense of the things that belong to their peace.

What shall we say then of those parents, who, through fear of alarming their minds, and augmenting their disorder; will not suffer any mention to be made to them of the approach of death, or the importance of eternity? I will relate to you an example of this. A young gentleman of estate in my parish, was taken ill of a dangerous fever in a friend's house at a distance. I went to see him in his illness, and his mother, a widow lady, intreated me not to say anything alarming to him, and not to pray with him, but to go to prayer in another room, wherein she wisely observed, it would have the same effect. The young man himself soon found that I did not act as he had expected, and was so impatient that it became necessary to give him the true reason. On this he insisted, in the most positive manner, that all restrictions should be taken off, which was done. What was the consequence? He was exceedingly pleased and composed; and if this circumstance did not hasten, it neither hindered nor retarded his recovery.

Be pleased to remark, that the young gentleman here spoken of, neither was at that time, nor is yet, so far as I am able to judge, truly religious; and therefore I have formed a fixed opinion, that in this, as in many other instances, the wisdom of man disappoints itself. Pious advice and consolation, if but tolerably administered in sickness, are not only useful to the soul, but



serve particularly to calm an agitated mind, to bring the animal spirits to an easy flow, and the whole frame into such a state as will best favour the operation of medicine, or the efforts of the constitution, to throw off or conquer the disease.

Suffer me to wander a little from my subject, by observing to you, that as I do not think the great are to be much envied for any thing, so they are truly and heartily to be pitied for the deception that is usually put upon them by flattery and false tenderness. Many of them are brought up with so much delicacy, that they are never suffered to see any miserable or afflicting object, nor, so far as can be hindered, to hear any affecting story of distress. If they themselves are sick, how many absurd and palpable lies are told them by their friends? and as for physicians, I may safely say, few of them are much conscience bound in this matter. Now, let the success of these measures be what it will, the only fruit to be reaped from them is to make a poor dying sinner mistake his or her condition, and vainly dream of earthly happiness, while hastening to the pit of perdition. But, as I said before, men are often taken in their own craftiness. It oftentimes happens that such persons, by an ignorant servant, or officious neighbour, or some unlucky accident, make a sudden discovery of their true situation, and the shock frequently proves fatal.—Oh! how much more desira-

ble is it—how much more like the reason of men, as well as the faith of christians—to consider and prepare for what must inevitably come to pass? I cannot easily conceive any thing more truly noble, than for a person in health and vigour, in honour and opulence, by voluntary reflection to sympathize with others in distress; and by a well founded confidence in divine mercy, to obtain the victory over the fear of death.

2. You ought to live so as to make religion appear respectable. Religion is a venerable thing in itself, and it spreads an air of dignity over a person's whole deportment. I have seen a common tradesman, merely because he was a man of true piety and undeniable worth, treated by his children, apprentices and servants, with a much greater degree of deference and submission, than is commonly given to men of superior station, without that character. Many of the same meannesses are avoided, by a gentleman from a principle of honour, and by a good man from a principle of conscience. The first keeps out of the company of common people, because they are below him—the last is cautious of mixing with them, because of that levity and profanity that is to be expected from them. If, then, religion is really venerable when sincere, a respectable conduct ought to be maintained, as a proof of your own integrity, as well as to recommend it to your children. To this add, if you

please, that as reverence is the peculiar duty of children to their parents, any thing that tends to lessen it is more deeply felt by them than by others who observe it. When I have seen a parent, in the presence of his child, meanly wrangling with his servant, telling extravagant stories, or otherwise exposing his vanity, credulity or folly ; I have felt just the same proportion of sympathy and tenderness for the one, that I did of contempt or indignation at the other.

What has been said, will, in part, explain the errors which a parent ought to shun, and what circumstances he ought to attend to, that religion may appear respectable. All meannesses, whether of sentiment, conversation, dress, manners, or employment, are carefully to be avoided. You will apply this properly to yourself. I may, however, just mention, that there is a considerable difference in all these particulars, according to men's different stations. The same actions are mean in one station, that are not so in another. The thing itself, however, still remains ; as there is an order and cleanliness at the table of tradesmen, that is different from the elegance of a gentleman's, or the sumptuousness of a prince's or nobleman's. But to make the matter still plainer by particular examples. I look upon talkativeness and vanity to be among the greatest enemies to dignity. It is needless to say how much vanity is contrary to true religion ; and as to

the other, which may seem rather an infirmity than a sin, we are expressly cautioned against it, and commanded to be swift to hear, and slow to speak. Sudden anger, too, and loud clamorous scolding, are at once contrary to piety and dignity. Parents should, therefore, acquire as much as possible, a composure of spirit, and meekness of language; nor are there many circumstances that will more recommend religion to children, when they see that this self-command is the effect of principle, and a sense of duty.

There is a weakness I have observed in many parents, to show a partial fondness for some of their children, to the neglect, and in many cases approaching to a jealousy or hatred of others. Sometimes we see a mother discover an excessive partiality to a handsome daughter, in comparison of those that are more homely in their figure. This is a barbarity, which would be truly incredible, did not experience prove that it really exists. One would think they should rather be excited by natural affection, to give all possible encouragement to those who labour under a disadvantage, and bestow every attainable accomplishment to balance the defects of outward form. At other times we see a partiality, which cannot be accounted for at all, where the most ugly, peevish, froward child of the whole family, is the favourite of both parents. Reason ought to counteract these errors; but piety ought to extirpate them entirely. I do

not stay to mention the bad effects that flow from them, my purpose being only to show the excellence of that character which is exempted from them.

The real dignity of religion will also appear in the conduct of a good man towards his servants. It will point out the true and proper distinction between condescension and meanness. Humility is the very spirit of the gospel. Therefore, hear your servants with patience, examine their conduct with candour, treat them with all the humanity and gentleness that is consistent with unre-mitted authority: when they are sick, visit them in person, provide remedies for them, sympathize with them, and show them that you do so; take care of their interests; assist them with your counsel and influence to obtain what is their right. But, on the other hand, never make yourself their proper companion: do not seem to taste their society; do not hear their jokes, or ask their news, or tell them yours. Believe me, this will never make you either beloved or esteemed by your servants themselves; and it will greatly derogate from the dignity of true religion in the eyes of your children. Suffer me also to caution you against that most unjust and illiberal practice, of exercising your wit in humorous strokes upon your servants, before company, or while they wait at table. I do not know any thing so evidently mean, that is at the same time so common. It is I think,

just such a cowardly thing as to beat a man who is bound; because the servant, however happy a repartee might occur to him, is not at liberty to answer, but at the risk of having his bones broken. In this, as in many other particular reasons, refinement, and liberal manners, teach exactly the same thing with religion, and I am happy in being able to add, that religion is generally the most powerful, as well as the most uniform principle of decent conduct.

I shall have done with this particular, when I have observed, that those who are engaged in public, or what I may call political life, have an excellent opportunity of making religion appear truly respectable. What I mean is, by showing themselves firm and incorruptible in supporting those measures that appear best calculated for promoting the interest of religion, and the good of mankind. In all these cases, I admire that man who has principles, whose principles are known, and whom every body despairs of being able to seduce, or bring over to the opposite interest. I do not commend furious and intemperate zeal. Steadiness is a much better, and quite a different thing. I would contend with any man who should speak most calmly, but I would also contend with him who should act most firmly. As for your placebos, your prudent, courtly, compliant gentlemen, whose vote in assembly will tell you where they

dined the day before, I hold them very cheap indeed, as you very well know. I do not enter further into this argument, but conclude at this time, by observing, that public measures are always embraced under pretence of principle; and therefore an uniform uncorrupted public character is one of the best evidences of real principle. The free thinking gentry tell us, upon this subject, that "every man has his price." It lies out of my way to attempt refuting them at present, but it is to be hoped there are many whose price is far above their reach. If some of my near relations, who took so much pains to attach me to the interest of evangelical truth, had been governed by court influence in their political conduct, it had not been in my power to have esteemed their characters, or perhaps to have adhered to their instructions. But as things now stand, I have done both from the beginning, and I hope God will enable me by his grace, to continue to do so to the end of life.

LETTERS  
ON  
MARRIAGE.

—————00000—————  
LETTER I.

**I** OFFER, with some hesitation, a few reflections upon the married state. I express myself thus, because the subject has been so often and so fully treated, and by writers of the first class, that it may be thought nothing now remains to be said that can merit attention. My only apology is, that what I offer is the fruit of real observation and personal reflection. It is not a copy of any man's writings, but my own thoughts; and therefore if the sentiments should not be in themselves wholly new, they may possibly appear in a light not altogether common. I shall give you them in the way of aphorisms or observations; and subjoin to each a few thoughts by way of proof or illustration.

1. Nothing can be more contrary to reason or public utility, than the conversation and writings of those who turn matrimony into ridicule; yet it is in many cases, as weakly defended, as it is unjustly attacked.

Those who treat marriage with ridicule, act in direct and deliberate opposition to the



order of providence, and to the constitution of the society of which they are members. The true reason why they are borne with so patiently, is, that the Author of our nature has implanted in us instinctive propensities, which are by much too strong for their feeble attacks.—But if we are to estimate the malignity of a man's conduct or sentiments, not from their effect, but from their native tendency, and his inward disposition, it is not easy to imagine any thing more criminal, than an attempt to bring marriage into disesteem. It is plainly an effort not only to destroy the happiness, but to prevent the existence of human nature. A man who continues through life in a single state, ought, in justice to endeavour to satisfy the public that his case is singular, and that he has some insuperable obstacle to plead in his excuse. If, instead of this, he reasons in defence of his own conduct, and takes upon him to condemn that of others, it is at once incredible and absurd: that is to say, he can scarcely be believed to be sincere. And whether he be sincere or not, he deserves to be detested.

In support of the last part of my remark, let it be observed, that those who write in defence of marriage usually give such sublime and exalted descriptions, as are not realized in one case of a thousand; and therefore cannot be a just motive to a considerate man. Instead of insisting on the absolute necessity of marriage for the service

Of the state, and the solid advantages that arise from it, in ordinary cases; they give us a certain refined idea of felicity, which hardly exists any where but in the writer's imagination. Even the Spectator, than whom there is hardly in our language a more just and rational writer, after saying many excellent things in defence of marriage, scarcely ever fails to draw the character of a lady in such terms, that I may safely say not above one that answers the description is to be found in a parish, or perhaps a country. Now, is it not much better to leave the matter to the force of nature, than to urge it by such arguments as these? Is the manner of thinking induced by such writings, likely to hasten or postpone a man's entering into the marriage state?

There is also a fault I think to be found in almost every writer who speaks in favour of the female sex, that they over-rate the charms of the outward form. This is the case in all romances—a class of writings to which the world is very little indebted—The same thing may be said of plays, where the heroine for certain, and often all the ladies that are introduced, are represented as imitantly beautiful. Even Mr. Addison himself in his admirable description of Martia, which he puts in the mouth of Juba, though it begins with,

'Tis not a set of features, or complexion, &c. yet could not help inserting

*True she is fair ; oh, how divinely fair !*

Now, I apprehend this is directly contrary to what should be the design of every moral writer. Men are naturally too apt to be carried away with the admiration of a beautiful face. Must it not, therefore, confirm them in this error, when beauty is made an essential part of every amiable character? The preference such writers pretend to give to the mental qualities, goes but a little way to remedy the evil. If they are never separated in the description, wherever men find the one, they will presume upon the other. But is this according to truth, or agreeable to experience? What vast numbers of the most valuable women are to be found, who are by no means "divinely fair?" Are these all to be neglected then? Or is it not certain, from experience, that there is not a single quality, on which matrimonial happiness depends so little, as outward form? Every other quality that is good, will go a certain length to atone for what is bad; as, for example, if a woman is active and industrious in her family, it will make a husband bear with more patience a little anxiety of countenance, or fretfulness of temper, though in themselves disagreeable. But (always supposing the honey-moon to be over) I do not think that beauty atones in the least degree for any bad

quality whatsoever; it is, on the contrary, an aggravation of them, being considered as a breach of faith, or deception, by holding out a false signal.

2. In the married state in general, there is not so much happiness as young lovers dream of; nor is their by far so much unhappiness, as loose authors universally suppose.

The first part of this aphorism will probably be easily admitted. Before mentioning, however, the little I mean to say upon it, I beg leave to observe, that it would be quite wrong to blame the tenderness and fervency of affection, by which the sexes are drawn to one another, and that generous devotedness of hearts which is often to be seen on one, and sometimes on both sides. This is nature itself; and when under the restraint of reason, and government of prudence, may be greatly subservient to the future happiness of life. But there is certainly an extravagance of sentiment and language on this subject, that is at once ridiculous in itself, and the proper cause, in due time, of wretchedness and disappointment.

Let any man, who has outlived these sensations himself, and has leisure to be amused, dip a little into the love songs that have been composed and published from Anacreon to the present day, and what a fund of entertainment will he find provided for him! The heathen gods and goddesses are the standing and lawful means of celebrating

the praises of a mistress before whom, no doubt, Venus for beauty, and Minerva for wisdom, must go for nothing. Every image in nature has been called up to heighten our idea of female charms—the paleness of the lily, the freshness of the rose, the blush of the violet, and the vermillion of the peach. This is even still nothing. One of the most approved topics of a love-sick writer is, that all nature fades and mourns at the absence of his fair, and puts on a new bloom at her approach. All this, we know well, has place only in his imagination; for nature proceeds quietly in her course, without minding him and his charmer in the least. But we are not yet done. The glory of the heavenly orbs, the lustre of the sun himself, and even the joys of heaven, are frequently and familiarly introduced, to express a lover's happiness or hopes. Flames, darts, arrows, and lightning from a female eye, have been expressions as old at least as the art of writing, and are still in full vogue. Some of these we can find no other fault with than that they are a little *outré* as the French express it; but I confess I have sometimes been surprised at the choice of lightning, because it is capable of a double application, and may put us in mind that some wives have lightning in their eyes sufficient to terrify a husband, as well as the maids have to consume a lover.

Does not all this plainly show, that young persons are apt to indulge themselves with

romantic expectations of a delight, both ecstatic and permanent, such as never did and never can exist? And does it not at the same time expose matrimony to the scoffs of libertines, who, knowing that these raptures must soon come to an end, think it sufficient to disparage the state itself, that some inconsiderate persons have not met with in it, what it was never intended to bestow?

I proceed, therefore, to observe that there is not by far so much unhappiness in the married state in general, as loose authors universally suppose. I choose to state the argument in this manner, because it is much more satisfying than drawing pictures of the extremes on either hand. It signifies very little, on the one hand, to describe the state of a few persons distinguished for understanding, successful in life, respected by the public, and dear to one another; or on the other, those hateful brawls which by and by produce an advertisement in the newspapers, "Whereas Sarah the wife of the subscriber, has eloped from his bed and board," &c. If we would treat of this matter with propriety, we must consider how it stands among the bulk of mankind. The proposition, then, I mean to establish, is, that there is much less unhappiness in the matrimonial state than is often apprehended, and indeed as much real comfort as there is any ground to expect.

To support this truth, I observe, that taking mankind throughout, we find much more satisfaction and cheerfulness in the married than in the single. In proportion to their numbers, I think of those that are grown up to maturer years, or past the meridian of life, there is a much greater degree of peevishness and discontent, whimsicalness and peculiarity, in the last than in the first. The prospect of continuing single to the end of life, narrows the mind and closes the heart. I knew an instance of a gentleman of good estate, who lived single till he was past forty, and he was esteemed by all his neighbours not only frugal, but mean in some parts of his conduct. This same person afterwards marrying and having children, every body observed that he became liberal and open-hearted on the change, when one would have thought he had a stronger motive than before, to save and hoard up. On this a neighbour of his made a remark, as a philosopher, that every ultimate passion is stronger than an intermediate one; that a single person loves wealth immediately, and on its own account; whereas a parent can scarcely help preferring his children before it, and valuing it only for their sakes.

This leads me to observe, that marriage must be the source of happiness, as being the immediate cause of many other relations, the most interesting and delightful. I cannot easily figure to myself any man who does

not look upon it as the first of earthly blessings, to have children, to be the objects of attachment and care when they are young, and to inherit his name and substance, when he himself must, in the course of nature, go off the stage. Does not this very circumstance give unspeakable dignity to each parent in the other's eye, and serve to increase and confirm that union, which youthful passion, and less durable motives, first occasioned to take place? I rather choose to mention this argument, because neither exalted understandings, nor elegance of manners, are necessary to give it force. It is felt by the peasant as well as by the prince, and, if we believe some observers on human life, its influence is not less, but greater in the lower than in the higher ranks.

Before I proceed to any farther remarks, I must say a few words, to prevent or remove a deception, which very probably leads many into error on this subject. It is no other than a man's supposing what would not give him happiness, cannot give it to another. Because, perhaps, there are few married women, whose persons, conversation, manners, and conduct, are altogether to his taste, he takes upon him to conclude, that the husbands, in these numerous instances, must lead a miserable life. Is it needful to say any thing to show the fallacy of this? The tastes and dispositions of men are as various as their faces; and therefore what is pleasing to one, may be,



not barely tolerable, but agreeable to another. I have known a husband delighted with his wife's fluency and poignancy of speech in scolding her servants, and another who was not able to bear the least noise of the kind with patience.

Having obviated this mistake, it will be proper to observe, that through all the lower and middle ranks of life, there is generally a good measure of matrimonial or domestic comfort, when their circumstances are easy, or their estate growing. This is easily accounted for, not only from their being free from one of the most usual causes of peevishness and discontent, but because the affairs of a family are very seldom in a thriving state, unless both contribute their share of diligence; so that they have not only a common happiness to share, but a joint merit in procuring it. Men may talk in raptures of youth and beauty, wit and sprightliness, and a hundred other shining qualities; but after seven years cohabitation, not one of them is to be compared to good family management, which is seen at every meal, and felt every hour in the husband's purse. To this, however, I must apply the caution given above.—Such a wife may not appear quite killing to a stranger on a visit. There are a few distinguished examples of women of the first rate understandings, who have all the elegance of court breeding in the parlour, and all the frugality and activity of a farmer's

wife in the kitchen; but I have not found this to be the case in general. I learned from a certain author many years ago, that "a great care of household affairs generally spoils the free, careless air of a fine lady;" and I have seen no reason to disbelieve it since.

Once more, so far as I have been able to form a judgment, wherever there is a great and confessed superiority of understanding on one side, with some good nature on the other, there is domestic peace. It is of little consequence whether the superiority be on the side of the man or woman, provided the ground of it be manifest. The fiercest contentions are generally where the just title to command is not quite clear. I am sensible I may bring a little ridicule upon myself here. It will be alleged that I have clearly established the right of female authority over that species of husbands, known by the name of hen-peckt. But I beg that the nature of my position may be attentively considered. I have said, "Wherever there is a great and confessed superiority of understanding." Should not a man comply with reason, when offered by his wife, as well as any body else? Or ought he to be against reason, because his wife is for it? I therefore take the liberty of rescuing from the number of hen-peckt, those who ask the advice, and follow the direction of their wives in most cases, because they are really better than any they could

give themselves—reserving those only under the old denomination, who, through fear, are subject, not to reason, but to passion and ill-humour. I shall conclude this observation with saying, for the honour of the female sex, that I have known a greater number of instances of just and amiable conduct, in case of a great inequality of judgment, when the advantage was on the side of the woman, than when it was on the side of the man. I have known many women of judgment and prudence, who carried it with the highest respect and decency, to weak and capricious husbands: but not many men of distinguished abilities, who did not betray, if not contempt, at least great indifference, towards weak or trifling wives.

Some other things I had intended to offer upon this subject, but as the letter has been drawn out to a greater length than I expected, and they will come in with at least equal propriety under other maxims, I conclude at present.

## LETTER II.

3. IT is by far the safest and most promising way to marry with a person nearly equal in rank, and perhaps in age; but if there is to be a difference, the risk is much greater when a man marries below his rank, than when a woman descends from her's.

The first part of this maxim has been in substance advanced by many writers, and therefore little will need to be said upon it. I must, however, explain its meaning, which is not always clearly comprehended. By equality in rank, must be understood equality not in fortune, but in education, taste, and habits of life. I do not call it inequality, when a gentleman of estate marries a lady who has been from the beginning brought up in the same class of society with himself; and is in every respect as elegant in her sentiments and manners, but by some incidents, that perhaps have lately happened, is unequal to him in point of fortune. I know that from the corrupt and selfish views which prevail so generally in the world, a marriage of this kind is often considered as unequal, and an act of great condescension on the part of the man; but the sentiment is illiberal and unjust. In the same manner, when a lady

marries a gentleman of character and capacity, and is in every respect suitable to her, but that his estate is not equal to what she might expect, I do not call it unequal. It is true, parents too frequently prefer circumstances to character, and the female friends of a lady at her own disposal, may say in such a case, that she has made a poor bargain. But taking it still for granted that the fortune only is unequal, I affirm there is nothing in this circumstance that forebodes future dissention, but rather the contrary. An act of generosity never produced a fretful disposition in the person who did it, nor is it reasonable to suppose it will often have that effect on the one who receives it.

The importance, therefore, of equality, arises singly from this circumstance—that there is a great probability, that the turn, taste, employments, amusements, and general carriage of the persons so intimately joined, and so frequently together, will be mutually agreeable.

The occasion or motive of first entering into the marriage contract, is not of so much consequence to the felicity of the parties, as what they find after they are fairly engaged, and cannot return back. When I visit a new country, my judgment of it may be influenced a little, but neither much nor long, by flattering hopes or hideous apprehensions, entertained before actual trial. It has often been said that dissentions between married

people, generally take their rise from very inconsiderable circumstances; to which I will add, that this is most commonly the case among persons of some station, sense, and breeding. This may seem odd, but the difficulty is easily solved. Persons of this character have a delicacy on the subject of so close an union, and expect a sweetness and compliance in matters that would not be minded by the vulgar; so that the smallness of the circumstance appears in their eye an aggravation of the offence. I have known a gentleman of rank and his lady part for life, by a difference arising from a thing said at supper, that was not so much as observed to be an impropriety by three fourths of the company.

This, then, is what I apprehend occasions the importance of equality in rank. Without this equality, they do not understand one another sufficiently for continual intercourse.— Many causes of difference will arise, not only sudden and unexpected, but impossible to be foreseen, and therefore not provided against. I must also observe, that an explanation or expostulation, in the cases here in view, is more tedious and difficult than any other—perhaps more dangerous and uncertain in the issue. How shall the one attempt to convince the other of an incongruity of behaviour, in what all their former ideas have taught them to believe as innocent or decent, sometimes even laudable? The attempt is

often considered as an insult on their former station, and instead of producing concord, lays the foundation of continual solicitude, or increasing aversion. A man may be guilty of speaking very unadvisedly through intemperate rage, or may perhaps come home flustered with liquor, and his wife, if prudent, may find a season for mentioning them, when the admonition will be received with calmness, and followed by reformation; but if she discovers her displeasure at rusticity of carriage, or meanness of sentiment, I think there is little hope that it will have any effect that is good. The habit cannot be mended; yet he may have sagacity enough to see that the wife of his bosom has despised him in her heart.

I am going to put a case: Suppose that the late ———, who acquired so vast an estate, had married a lady of the first rank, education, and taste, and that she had learned a few anecdotes of his public speeches—that he spoke of *this here* report of *that there* committee—or of a man's being *drowned* on the coast of the *Island* of Pennsylvania. Now, I desire to know how she could help pouting, and being a little out of humour, especially if he came home full of inward satisfaction, and was honestly of opinion that he spoke *equally as well* as any other in the house? That things may be fairly balanced, I will put another case. Suppose a gentleman of rank, literature, and taste, has married a

tradesman's daughter for the sake of fortune, or from desire, which he calls love, kindled by an accidental glance of a fresh-coloured young woman: suppose her never to have had the opportunity of being in what the world calls good company, and in consequence to be wholly ignorant of the modes that prevail there; suppose, at the same time, that her understanding has never been enlarged by reading, or conversation. In such a case, how soon must passion be sated, and what innumerable causes of shame and mortification must every day produce? I am not certain whether the difficulty will be greater, if she continues the manners of her former, or attempts to put on those of her present station. If any man thinks that he can easily preserve the esteem and attention due to a wife in such circumstances, he will probably be mistaken, and no less so if he expects to communicate refinement by a few lessons, or prevent misbehaviour by fretfulness, or peevish and satirical remarks.

But let me come now to the latter part of the maxim, which I do not remember to have ever met with in any author—that there is a much greater risk when a man marries below his rank, than when a woman marries below her's. As to the matter of fact, it depends entirely on the justness and accuracy of my observations, of which every reader must be left to judge for himself. I must, however, take notice, that when I speak of



a woman marrying below her station, I have no view at all to include what there have been some examples of—a gentleman's daughter running away with her father's footman, or a lady of quality with a player, this is, in every instance, an act of pure lasciviousness, and is, without any exception that ever I heard of, followed by immediate shame and future beggary.—It has not, however, any more connection with marriage, than the transactions of a brothel, or the memoirs of a kept mistress. The truth is, elopements in general, are things of an eccentric nature: and when I hear of one, I seldom make any further enquiry after the felicity of the parties. But when marriages are contracted with any degree of deliberation, if there be a difference in point of rank, I think it is much better the advantage should be on the woman's side than on the man's; that is to say, marriages of the first kind are usually more happy than the other.

Supposing, therefore, the fact to be as now stated, what remains for me is, to investigate a little the causes of it, and point out those circumstances in human tempers and characters, or in the state of society, which give us reason to expect that it will, in most cases, turn out so. Whenever any effect is general, in the moral as well as natural world, there must be some permanent cause, or causes, sufficient to account for it. Shall we

assign as one reason for it, that there is, taking them complexly, more of real virtue and commanding principle in the female sex, than in the male, which makes them, upon the whole, act a better part in the married relation? I will not undertake to prove this opinion to be true, and far less will I attempt to refute or show it to be false. Many authors of great penetration have affirmed it; and doubtless taken virtue to be the same thing with sound faith and good morals, much may be said in its favour. But there does not appear to me so great a superiority in this respect, as fully to account for the effect in question. Besides, the advantages which men have in point of knowledge, from the usual course of education, may perhaps balance the superiority of women, in point of virtue; for none surely can deny, that matrimonial discord may not arise from ignorance and folly, as well as vice. Allowing, therefore, as much influence to this cause, as every one from his experience and observation may think is due, I beg leave to suggest some other things which certainly do co-operate with it, and augment its force.

1. It is much easier, in most cases, for a man to improve or rise after marriage to a more elegant taste in life than a woman. I do not attribute this in the least to superior natural talents, but to the more frequent opportunities he has of seeing the world, and conversing with persons of different ranks. There is

no instance in which the sphere of business and conversation is not more extensive to the husband than the wife; and therefore if a man is married to one of taste superior to his own, he may draw gradually nearer to her, though she descend very little. I think I can recollect more instances than one of a man in business married at first to his equal, and, on a second marriage, to one of higher breeding, when not only the house and family, but the man himself, was speedily in a very different style. I can also recollect instances in which married persons rose together to an opulent estate from almost nothing, and the man improved considerably in politeness, or fitness for public life, but the woman not at all. The old gossips and the old conversation continued to the very last. It is not even without example, that a plain woman, raised by the success of her husband, becomes impatient of the society forced upon her, takes refuge in the kitchen, and spends most of her agreeable hours with her servants, from whom, indeed, she differs nothing but in name. A certain person in a trading city in Great-Britain, from being merely a mechanic, turned dealer, and in a course of years acquired an immense fortune. He had a strong desire that his family should make a figure, and spared no expence in purchasing velvets, silks, laces, &c. but at last he found that it was lost labour, and said very truly, that all the money

in Great Britain would not make his wife and his daughters *ladies*.

2. When a woman marries below her rank, I think it is, generally speaking, upon better motives than when a man marries below his; and therefore no wonder that it should be attended with greater comfort. I find it asserted in several papers of the Spectator, and I think it must be admitted by every impartial observer, that women are not half so much governed, in their love attachments, by beauty, or outward form, as men. A man of a very mean figure, if he has any talents, joined to a tolerable power of speech, will often make him acceptable to a very lovely woman. It is also generally thought that a woman rates a man pretty much according to the esteem he is held in by his own sex: if this is the case, it is to be presumed that when a man succeeds in his addresses to a lady of higher breeding than his own, he is not altogether void of merit, and therefore will not in the issue disgrace her choice. This will be confirmed by reflecting that many such marriages must be with persons of the learned professions. It is past a doubt that literature refines as well as enlarges the mind, and generally renders a man capable of appearing with tolerable dignity, whatever have been the place or circumstances of his birth. It is easy to see that the reverse of all this must happen upon the other supposition: when a man marries

below his rank, the very best motives to which it can be attributed, is an admiration of her beauty. Good sense, and other more valuable qualities are not easily seen under the disguise of low-breeding; and when they are seen, have seldom justice done them. Now as beauty is much more fading than life, and fades sooner in a husband's eye than any other, in a little time nothing will remain but what tends to create uneasiness and disgust.

3. The possession of the graces, or taste and elegance of manners, is a much more important part of a female than a male character. Nature has given a much greater degree of beauty and sweetness to the outward form of women than of men, and has by that means pointed out wherein their several excellencies should consist. From this, in conjunction with the former observation, it is manifest, that the man who finds in his wife a remarkable defect in point of politeness, or the art of pleasing, will be much more disappointed than the woman who finds a like defect in her husband. Many do not form any expectation of refinement in their husbands, even before marriage: not a few, if I am not much mistaken, are rather pleased than otherwise, to think that any who enters the house, perceives the difference between the elegance of the wife, and the plainness, not to say the awkwardness of the husband. I have

observed this, even down to the lowest rank. A tradesman or country farmer's wife will sometimes abuse and scold her husband for want of order or cleanliness, and there is no mark of inward malice or ill-humour in that scolding, because she is sensible it is her proper province to be accurate in that matter. I think also, that the husband in such cases is often gratified instead of being offended, because it pleases him to think that he has a wife that does just as she ought to do. But take the thing the other way, and there is no rank of life, from the prince to the peasant, in which the husband can take pleasure in a wife more awkward or more slovenly than himself.

To sum up the whole, if some conformity or similarity of manners is of the utmost consequence to matrimonial comfort—if taste and elegance are of more consequence to the wife than the husband, according to their station:—and, if it is more difficult for her to acquire it after marriage, if she does not possess it before—I humbly conceive I have fully supported my proposition, that there is a much greater risk in a man's marrying below his station, than a woman's descending from her's.

## LETTER III.

I HAVE not yet done with the maxims on matrimonial happiness; therefore observe,

4. That it is not by far of so much consequence, what are the talents, temper, turn of mind, character, or circumstances of both, or either of the parties, as that there be a certain suitableness or correspondence of those of the one to those of the other.

Those essay writers, who have taken human nature and life as their great general subject, have many remarks on the causes of infelicity in the marriage union, as well as many beautiful and striking pictures of what would be just, generous, prudent, and dutiful conduct, or their contraries, in particular circumstances. Great pains have been taken also to point out what ought to be the motives of choice to both parties, if they expect happiness. Without entering into a full detail of what has been said upon this subject, I think the two chief competitors for preference, have generally been—good nature and good sense. The advocates for the first say, that as the happiness of married people must arise from a continual interchange of kind offices, and from a number of small circumstances, that occur every hour, a gen-

tle and easy disposition—a temper that is happy in itself—must be the cause of happiness to another. The advocates for good sense, say, that the sweetness of good nature is only for the honey-moon; that it will either change its nature, and become sour by long-standing, or become wholly insipid; so that if it do not generate hatred, it will at least incur indifference or contempt; whereas good sense is a sterling quality, which cannot fail to produce and preserve esteem—the true foundation of rational love.

If I may, as I believe most people do, take the prevailing sentiments within the compass of my own reading and conversation, for the general opinion, I think it is in favour of good sense. And if we must determine between these two, and decide which of them is of the most importance when separated from the other, I have very little to say against the public judgment. But in this, as in many other cases, it is only imperfect and general, and often ill understood and falsely applied. There is hardly a more noted saying, than that a man of sense will never use a woman ill, which is true or false according to the meaning that is put upon the phrase, *using a woman ill*. If it be meant, that he will not so probably beat his wife, as a fool; that he will not scold or curse her, or treat her with ill manners before company, or indeed that he will not so probably keep a continual wrangling, either in public or



private, I admit that it is true. Good sense is the best security against indecorums of every kind. But if it be meant, that a man will not make his wife in any case truly miserable, I utterly deny it. On the contrary, there are many instances in which men make use of their sense itself, their judgment, penetration, and knowledge of human life, to make their wives more exquisitely unhappy. What shall we say of those, who can sting them with reflections so artfully guarded that it is impossible not to feel them, and yet almost as impossible with propriety to complain of them?

I must also observe, that a high degree of delicacy in sentiment, although this is the prevailing ingredient when men attempt to paint refined felicity in the married state, is one of the most dangerous qualities that can be mentioned. It is like certain medicines that are powerful in their operation, but at the same time require the utmost caution and prudence, as to the time and manner of their being applied.—A man or woman of extreme delicacy is a delightful companion for a visit or a day. But there are many characters which I would greatly prefer in a partner, or a child, or other near relation, in whose permanent happiness I felt myself deeply concerned. I hope no-body will think me so clownish as to exclude sentiment altogether. I have declared my opinion upon this subject, and also my desire that the wo-

man should be the more refined of the two. But I adhere to it, that carrying this matter to an extreme is of the most dangerous consequence. Your high sentimentalists form expectations which it is impossible to gratify. The gallantry of courtship, and the *bien-séance* of general conversation in the *beau monde*, seem to promise what the down-right reality of matrimony cannot afford.

I will here relate a case that fell within my observation. A person of noble birth had been some years married to a merchant's daughter of immense fortune, by which his estate had been saved from ruin. Her education had been as good as money could make it, from her infancy; so that she knew every mode of high life as well as he. They were upon a visit to a family of equal rank, intimately connected with the author of this letter. The manner of the man was distinguished and exemplary. His behaviour to his lady was with the most perfect delicacy. He spoke to her as often as to any other, and treated her not only with the same complacency, but with the same decency and reserve, that he did other ladies. To this he added the most tender solicitude about her not taking cold, about her place in the chamber, and her covering when going abroad, &c, &c. After their departure, the whole family they had left excepting one, were two or three days expatiating on the beauty of his behaviour. One lady in particular said at

last, "Oh! how happy a married woman I have seen." The single dissenter, who was an elderly woman, then said, "Well; you may be right; but I am of a different opinion, I do not like so perfect and finished a ceremonial between persons who have been married five or six years at least. I observed that he did every thing that he ought to have done, and likewise that she received his civilities with much dignity and good manners, but with great gravity. I would rather have seen him less punctual and her more cheerful. If, therefore, that lady is as happy in her heart as you suppose, I am mistaken; that is all. But if I were to make a bet upon it, I would bet as much upon the tradesman and his wife, according to the common description, walking to church, the one three or four yards before the other, and never looking back." What did time discover? That nobleman and his lady parted within two years, and never re-united.

Let me now establish my maxim, that it is not the fine qualities of both or either party that will insure happiness, but that the one be suitable to the other. By their being suitable, is not to be understood their being both of the same turn; but that the defects of the one be supplied or submitted to by some correspondent quality of the other. I think I have seen many instances, in which gravity, severity, and even moroseness in a husband, where there has been vir-

tue at bottom, has been so tempted with meekness, gentleness and compliance in the wife, as has produced real and lasting comfort to both. I have also seen some instances, in which sourness, and want of female softness in a woman, has been so happily compensated by easiness and good humour in a husband, that no appearance of wrangling or hatred was to be seen in a whole life. I have seen multitudes of instances, in which vulgarity, and even liberal freedom, not far from brutality in a husband, has been borne with perfect patience and serenity by a wife, who, by long custom, had become, as it were, insensible of the impropriety, and yet never inattentive to her own behaviour.

As a farther illustration, I will relate two or three cases from real life, which have appeared to me the most singular in my experience. I spent some time, many years ago, in the neighbourhood of, and frequent intercourse with, a husband and his wife in the following state. She was not handsome, and at the same time was valetudinary, fretful and peevish—constantly talking of her ailments, dissatisfied with every thing about her, and, what appeared most surprising, she vented these complaints most when her husband was present. He, on the other hand, was most affectionate and sympathizing, constantly upon the watch for any thing that could gratify her desires, or alleviate her distresses. The appearance for a while surprized me, and I

thought he led the life of a slave. But at last I discovered that there are two ways of complaining, not suddenly distinguishable to common observers—the one is an expression of confidence, and the other of discontent. When a woman opens all her complaints to her husband, in full confidence that he will sympathize with her, and seeking the relief which such sympathy affords, taking care to keep to the proportion which experience hath taught her will not be disagreeable to him, it frequently increases, instead of extinguishing affection.

Take another case as follows: Syrisca was a young woman the reverse of a beauty. She got her living in a trading city, by keeping a small shop, not of the millinary kind, which is nearly allied to elegance and high life, but of common grocery goods, so that the poor were her chief customers.

By the death of a brother in the East-Indies, she became suddenly and unexpectedly to a fortune of many thousand pounds. The moment this was known, a knight's lady in the neighbourhood, destined Syrisca as a prize for Horatio, her own brother, of the military profession, on half pay, and rather past the middle of life. For this purpose she made her a visit, carried her to her house, assisted, no doubt, in bringing home and properly securing her fortune; and in as short a time as could well be expected, completed her purpose. They lived together on

an estate in the country, often visited by the great relations of the husband. Syrisca was good natured and talkative, and therefore often betrayed the meanness of her birth and education; but was not sensible of it. Good will supplied the place of good breeding with her, and she did not know the difference. Horatio had generosity and good sense, treated her with the greatest tenderness, and having a great fund of facetiousness and good humour, acquired a happy talent of giving a lively or sprightly turn to every thing said by his wife, or diverting the attention of the company to other subjects. The reader will probably say, he took the way that was pointed out by reason, and was most conducive to his own comfort. I say so too; but at the same time affirm, that there are multitudes who could not, or would not have followed his example.

I give one piece of history more, but with some fear, that nice readers will be offended, and call it a caricature. However, let it go. Agrestis was a gentleman of an ancient family, but the estate was almost gone; little more of it remained but what he farmed himself, and indeed his habitation did not differ from that of a farmer, but by having an old tower and battlements. He had either received no education, or had been incapable of profiting by it, for he was the most illiterate person I ever knew, who kept any company. His conversation did not rise even to

politics, for he found such insuperable difficulty in pronouncing the names of generals, admirals, countries, and cities, constantly occurring in the newspapers, that he was obliged to give them up altogether. Of ploughs, waggons, cows, and horses, he knew as much as most men: what related to these, with the prices of grain, and the news of births and marriages in the parish and neighbourhood, completed the circle of his conversation.

About the age of forty he married Lenia, a young woman of a family equal to him in rank, but somewhat superior in wealth. She knew a little more of the strain of fashionable conversation, and not a whit more of any thing else. She was a slattern in her person, and of consequence there was neither cleanliness nor order in the family. They had many children; she bore him twins twice—a circumstance of which he was very proud, and frequently boasted of it in a manner not over delicate to those who had not been so fortunate in that particular. They were both good natured and hospitable; if a stranger came he was made heartily welcome, though sometimes a little incommoded by an uproar among the children and the dogs, when striving about the fire in a cold day; the noise was, however, little less dissonant than the clamours of Agrestis himself, when rebuking the one, or chastening the other, out of complaisance to his guests. The couple

lived many years in the most perfect amity by their being perfectly suitable the one to the other; and I am confident not a woman envied the wife, nor a man the husband, while the union lasted.

It is very easy to see from these examples, the vast importance of the temper and manner of the one, being truly suitable to those of the other. If I had not given histories enough already, I could mention some in which each party I think could have made some other man or woman perfectly happy, and yet they never could arrive at happiness, or indeed be at peace with one another. Certainly, therefore, this should be an object particularly attended to in courtships, or while marriage is on the *tapis*, as politicians say.

If I look out for a wife, I ought to consider, not whether a lady has fine qualities for which she ought to be esteemed or admired, or whether she has such a deportment as I will take particular delight in, and such a taste as gives reason to think she will take delight in me; I may pitch too high, as well as too low, and the issue may be equally unfortunate. Perhaps I shall be told there lies the great difficulty. How shall we make this discovery? In time of youth and courtship, there is so much studied attention to please, from interested views, and so much restraint from fashion and the observation of others, that it is hard to judge how they will turn out afterwards.



This I confess to be a considerable difficulty, and at the same time greatest upon the man's side. The man being generally the eldest, his character, temper and habits, may be more certainly known.—Whereas there are sometimes great disappointments on the other side, and that happily both ways. I am able just now to recollect one or two instances of giddy and foolish, nay, of idle, lazy, drowsy girls, who, after marriage, felt themselves interested, and became as spirited and active heads of families, as any whatever, and also some of the most elegant and exemplary, who, after marriage, fell into a languid stupidity, and contracted habits of the most odious and disgusting kind. These instances, however, are rare, and those who will take the pains to examine, may in general obtain satisfaction. It is also proper to observe, that if a man finds it difficult to judge of the temper and character of a woman, he has a great advantage on his side, that the right of selection belongs to him. He may ask any woman he pleases, after the most mature deliberation, and need ask no other; whereas a woman must make the best choice she can, of those only who do or probably will ask her. But with these reflections in our view, what shall we say of the inconceivable folly of those, who, in time of courtship, are every now and then taking things in high dudgeon, and sometimes very great submissions are necessary to make up the breaches? If such

persons marry, and do not agree, shall we pity them? I think not. After the most serene courtship, there may possibly be a rough enough passage through life; but after a courtship of storms, to expect a marriage of calm weather, is certainly more than common presumption; and therefore they ought to take the consequences.

On the whole, I think that the calamities of the married state are generally to be imputed to the persons themselves, in the following proportion:—Three-fourths of the man for want of care and judgment in the choice, and one-fourth to the woman on the same score. Suppose a man had bought a farm, and after a year or two, should, in conversation with his neighbour, make heavy complaints how much he had been disappointed, I imagine his friend might say to him, did you not see this land before you bought it? O yes, I saw it often. Do you not understand soils? I think I do tolerably. Did you not examine it with care? Not so much as I should have done; standing at a certain place, it looked admirably well; the fences too were new, and looked exceedingly neat; the house had been just painted a stone colour, with panneling; the windows were large and elegant; but I neglected entirely to examine the sufficiency of the materials, or the disposition of the apartments. There were in the month of April two beautiful springs, but since I have lived here they have

been dry every year before the middle of June. Did you not enquire of those who had lived on the place, of the permanency of the springs? No, indeed, I omitted it. Had you the full measure you were promised? Yes, every acre.—Was the right complete and valid? Yes, yes, perfectly good; no man in America can take it from me. Were you obliged to take it up in part of a bad debt? No, nothing like it. I took such a fancy for it all at once, that I pestered the man from week to week to let me have it. Why really then, says his friend, I think you had better keep your complaints to yourself. Cursing and fretfulness will never turn stones into earth, or sand into loam; but I can assure you, that frugality, industry, and good culture, will make a bad farm very tolerable, and an indifferent one truly good.















