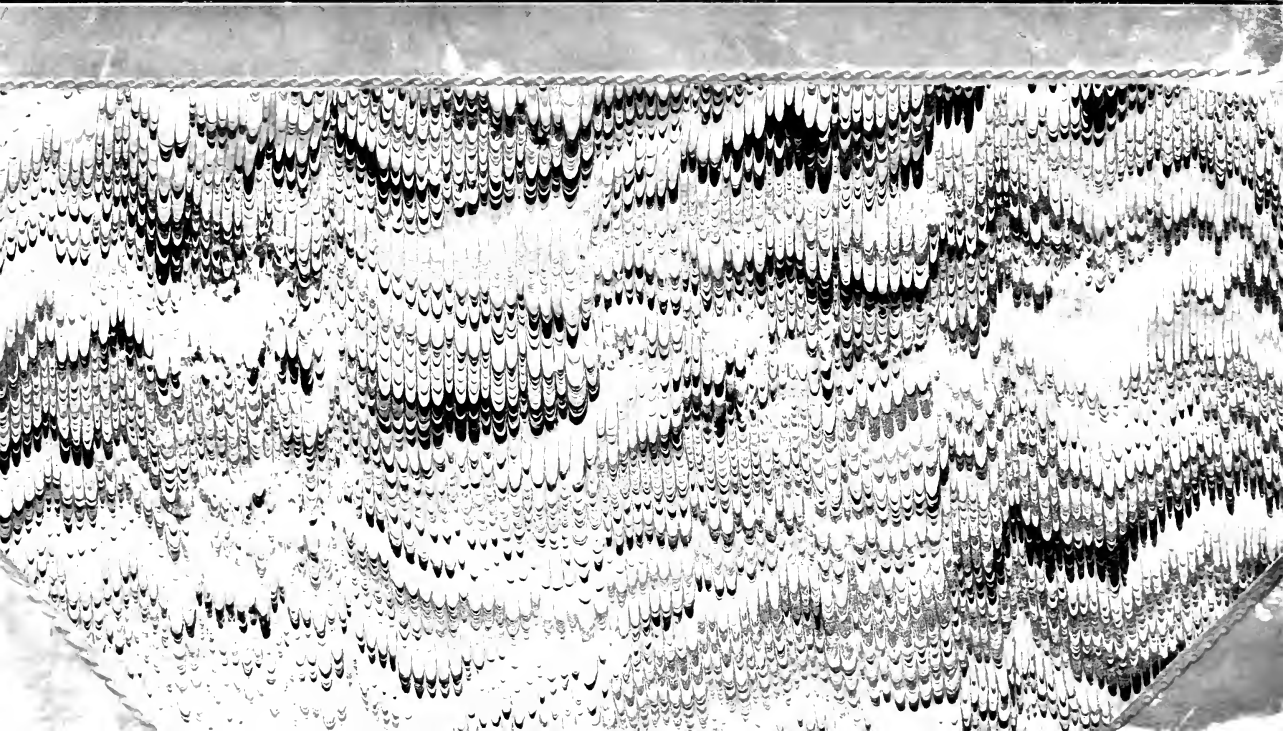

LECTURES

ON THE

PASTORAL CHARACTER:

BY THE LATE

GEORGE CAMPBELL,

D.D. F.R.S. EDINB.

PRINCIPAL OF MARISCHAL COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.

EDITED BY

JAMES FRASER, D.D.

MINISTER OF DRUMOAK, ABERDEENSHIRE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

BLACK, PARRY, AND KINGSBURY,

BOOKSELLERS TO THE HONOURABLE EAST-INDIA COMPANY,

No. 7, Leadenhall Street.

1811.

R. WATTS, PRINTER, BROXBOURNE, HERTS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In some late Periodical Publications, doubts have been expressed, oftener than once, respecting the authenticity of Dr. Campbell's Lectures lately published, particularly of those on Ecclesiastical History. And it has been mentioned, as a circumstance unusual, and affording ground for suspicion, that the name of the Editor has never been given to the Public. That defect is now supplied.

It is believed, that, in this part of the country, a doubt has never been entertained on the subject by any body. There are hundreds of persons living, who can attest

the sentiments to be the same they heard delivered by the Author in the Divinity Hall of Marischal College; and, as all the Lectures excited uncommon attention, many of the hearers can recognise the expression, in a great number of passages throughout the volumes published. But there is other evidence, which it may be proper to mention; and the Editor, from the friendship and confidence with which the late Dr. Campbell honoured him, has it in his power to put the authenticity of all the posthumous publications beyond a doubt. The original Manuscripts are still preserved, and, were it necessary, can be produced. This is a fact which many persons know.

The Lectures on Ecclesiastical History were the only part of his course intended by the Author for the press, and were carefully revised, and transcribed by his own hand. His other Lectures were first

delivered in the years 1772 and 1773; and the Author continued, during his Professorship, to read them to the Students, as they had been at first composed. Indeed, they were written so closely, as to admit very little addition or alteration. With these some freedom has been taken by the Editor, who has omitted several things that appeared to be repetitions, and corrected a few verbal inaccuracies of no great moment. All Dr. Campbell's Theological Prelections are now published, and none of the sentiments contained in them have been suppressed;—a circumstance, which many Readers will think of greater importance than all the other particulars which the Editor has mentioned.

Though the following work wants the benefit of his corrections, it will not, it is hoped, be found unworthy of the well-known and long-approved Author. It is

more of a practical nature, than any of the other Lectures; and many of the valuable remarks and counsels, respecting life and manners, with which it abounds, will be useful, not to Pastors only, but to others, especially to those who fill public stations in society. Every Reader must be pleased with the strong virtuous feeling discovered in every part of the work: and, to the Friends of Dr. Campbell, the publication will be particularly interesting; as this volume, more than all his other writings, affords a faithful and pleasing record of the sentiments, and of the disposition, of the Author.

JAMES FRASER.

Drumoak, Aug. 1, 1811.

LIST OF DR. CAMPBELL'S PUBLICATIONS.

PUBLISHED IN HIS LIFE-TIME:

I. *Dissertation on Miracles*, in Answer to David Hume. Of this Work, the Third Edition, containing also Sermons and Tracts, was published after the Author's Death . . . . . *Edinburgh*, 1797.
This last Edition is in 2 vols. octavo.

II. *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 2 vols. octavo . . . . . *London*, 1776.
A Second Edition, 2 vols. octavo . . . . . *London*, 1801.

III. *The Four Gospels*, translated from the Greek, with Critical Dissertations and Notes, 2 vols. quarto . . . . . *London*, 1789.
Also a Second Edition, in 4 vols. octavo, with the Author's last Corrections . . . . . *Aberdeen*, 1803.

PUBLISHED SINCE HIS DEATH:

IV. *Lectures on Ecclesiastical History*, 2 vols. octavo . . *London*, 1800.

V. *Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence*, 1 vol. octavo . . . . . *London*, 1807.

VI. *Lectures on the Pastoral Character*, octavo . . . . *London*, 1811.

DR. CAMPBELL DIED IN 1796.

CONTENTS

OF THE

LECTURES *on the* PASTORAL CHARACTER.

LECT. I.

IMPORTANCE *of the subject.—Influence of Example.* VICES *more especially reproachful in the Ministerial Character*—INTEMPERANCE—IMPIETY—LEVITY *of Behaviour.* . . . . . P. 1. to 27.

LECT. II.

Regard to the OUTWARD DECORUM *of Character in things naturally indifferent*——*Deference due to the Opinions of the People—Extremes of unbounded Compliance—and of violently shocking their Prejudices.*

P. 28—56.

LECT. III.

VIRTUES *especially requisite in the Pastor.* MEEKNESS *and* HUMILITY. *Obligation to these Duties, from the Example of Christ—from the* END *of their Ministry—and from the* MEANS *they are authorized to employ.*

P. 57—93.

CONTENTS.

LECT. IV.

FORTITUDE, *or a superiority to either fear or favour. Danger, in our Church, of listening to solicitations on any point which is to be of judicial determination. Steadiness in the essential part, the* MATTER *of our conduct. Meekness, Gentleness, and, as much as possible, Pleasantness, in the* MANNER. . . P. 94—120.

LECT. V.

Of TEMPERANCE. *A loose and dissolute manner in Conversation may shew a more vitiated disposition, and may do more hurt in society, than even some trespasses against the strict rules of Temperance.* . . P. 121—138.

LECT. VI.

VICES, *or* EVILS, *to which the occupation of a Minister exposes him. Mr. Hume's account of the spirit of the Pastoral Office—a* CARICATURA, *but may suggest some profitable instruction to Pastors. Temptation to Hypocrisy, to be overcome by* BEING *what the Hypocrite wants only to be thought. A bad man will find no comfort in the business of a Pastor.* P. 139—167.

LECT. VII.

Danger to Pastors from an excessive desire of POPULAR APPLAUSE. *To please men, only the* MEANS *to promote the great end,* their *good.—Instructions in the shortest and easiest way to become a* VERY GREAT MAN, *a Leader and an Oracle among the People, and to secure a Following whithersoever the Preacher goes.* P. 168—195.

LECT. VIII.

Fruits of the teaching of PULPIT CONTROVERTISTS, *and of those who inflame the minds of the people with what* they *term the* DEFECTIONS *of the Church. Of competition with others in the common popular arts, as in* CHOICE *of* SUBJECTS; *or, on certain occasions, an unseasonable* PROLIXITY. . . . . P. 196—228.

LECT. IX.

Of SLOTH. *Wealth, a great, but not the only, corrupter. Neither our scanty provision, nor our Ecclesiastical laws, a sufficient security against the risk of Laziness. Extremely rigorous laws fall into disuse. The practice of* COMPOSING *of the greatest consequence to us. The proper Employment of Time, and the advantages of following a settled plan.* . . . . . P. 229—258.

LECTURE I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT—INFLUENCE OF EXAMPLE —VICES MORE ESPECIALLY REPROACHFUL IN THE MINISTERIAL CHARACTER—INTEMPERANCE—IMPIETY —LEVITY OF BEHAVIOUR.

THE duties of a Christian pastor may all be comprised under these two heads, *instructing*, and *governing*. The first of these, from the different ways in which the people may be instructed, admits a subdivision into two, namely, *teaching*, and *example*. For assisting you in regard to the proper discharge of the duty of teaching, I have given you a Course of Lectures on *Christian Eloquence*. I now proceed to give you my sentiments on that *propriety of character*, and *exemplary conduct*,

which every minister ought carefully to observe. Indeed it may be said, that the duties in private life, of every Christian and of every pastor, are materially the same. Love to God, and love to man, constitute the sum of both. For this reason, one, at first view, would imagine that this part of the subject could admit nothing particular; an account of the duties, as well as of the doctrines of our religion, being comprehended under the third branch of the former general head—the *Christian system.* But, as the consideration of the design of the ministerial office affords an additional and strong obligation to the observance of every Christian duty, it also, in several cases, renders a certain delicacy and circumspection necessary in a minister; which, as in others it is not expected, so the want of it is scarcely attended to, or blamed. Every office too, and that of the ministry among the rest, has, in respect of moral conduct, its advantages and its temptations. To improve

the former, and to guard against the latter, is of particular importance, and demands the special attention of all those whose purpose it is to enter into that station. This branch of my subject I formerly denominated propriety of character, in what concerns the duties of private life. It is one of the first things which claim our attention in the pastoral charge. More of our success will depend on the due observance of it, than the generality of men are aware of.

I remarked formerly, that the office of the ministry, like every other, has its peculiar advantages, and its temptations. In regard to both, I shall consider, first, what those vices are which in a more especial manner tend to obstruct the minister's success; secondly, what those virtues are, of which the business of a Christian pastor requires especially the cultivation and exertion; thirdly, what those evils are, to which his very occupation itself may be said in some respect

to expose him. On these topics I shall be the more particular, both as they are of the utmost consequence, and as they are commonly too much overlooked. And, indeed, they will afford an occasion of canvassing some of the most delicate and momentous questions that can be moved, in regard to the ministerial deportment. The questions I mean, are such as concern Christian zeal, the nature of offence, the pursuit of popularity, and some others, on which it is often very difficult both to discern the just boundaries, and to confine ourselves within them, so as not to transgress on either side, by deficiency, or by excess. We may justly say, that no where does the rule of the Poet hold more invariably than here,

" Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines
" Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum."

And yet, perhaps, no where else are those '*fines*,' those boundaries, so hard to ascertain.

But before I enter on the discussion of

particulars, permit me to offer a few things, in order the more effectually to impress your minds with a sense of the importance of the subject. Our blessed Lord, in that discourse which is commonly called his Sermon on the Mount, (perhaps the first he ever spoke, at least the first that is recorded by one who was both an apostle and evangelist, and probably present at the time,) when signifying to his Disciples the nature of their future destination, expresses it emphatically, in the metaphorical style of the East, by calling them, at once, "the light of the world, and the salt of the earth;" probably alluding, in the former, to the knowledge which they ought to diffuse around them, in their public ministrations; and in the latter, to the influence, not less important, nor less effectual, though more secretly conveyed, of their private life and example. By means of this, they were to insinuate into the hearts of the people the love of virtue and true piety, and thus

to crush the seeds and check the progress of immorality and vice. The purpose that salt is often made to answer, in regard to carnal things, was the same with that for which the Disciples were intended, in regard to spiritual and moral things—to preserve others from corruption. In this respect, the pastor is not only under the same obligation with other Christians, from the interest he has in the matter himself, but is under a further obligation from the influence which his conduct, whether good or bad, must have upon others. This, as it is plainly implied in the words, does necessarily result from the charge allotted him, of overseeing and directing the lives of other Christians. "A bishop," says Paul to Timothy, "must be blameless;" a proposition still more forcible in the apostle's own language, as it conveys in it an argument to support it, Δει τον επισκοπον ανεπιλημπτον ειναι. The overseer (for so the word literally signifies, and is sometimes trans-

lated), the inspector into the conduct of others, has surely need to be unexceptionable as to his own. And, indeed, if the case be otherwise, his ministry will of course become, if not hurtful, at least despicable, among his people, and unsuccessful; his teaching will be neglected. If they attend at all upon it, their attendance will be merely formal; he will be heard with a listless indifference; his advice and exhortations will be vilified; the consolations will prove cold and insipid, which are administered by a man whom it is not in their power to esteem; the edge of his reproofs will be blunted; his person will be condemned. In a word, the whole of his ministrations will, like a lifeless carcase, be but a disagreeable and nauseous object. All will be considered as resulting from necessity, as the mere routine of a secular business; and totally destitute of that piety towards God, and charity to men, which, like the soul, the living principle in our mortal frame,

should animate the whole and every part. "If the salt," says our Lord, "wherewith "other things are seasoned, have lost its "savour, wherewith shall itself be salted? It "is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be "cast out, and trodden under foot of men."

On the other hand, how invincible is the attraction, how efficacious the influence, of a good life! How just the proverb, that example goes farther than precept! It both more clearly illustrates, and more powerfully enforces, the duties of life, than the other can effectuate. I say, it more clearly teaches and illustrates them. Accordingly, our Lord, who needed not that any should testify of man to him, for he knew what was in man, seems to have considered a Christian example as the most efficacious teaching. "Let your light," says he, "so shine before men, that they, "seeing your good works, may glorify your "father which is in heaven." This is preaching, not indeed to the ear, but to the eye,

the noblest of our senses; and that, by means of which the most durable impression is made upon the mind. Precepts and oral instructions are a sort of abstract lessons, which the generality of men, unaccustomed to reflection, are hardly capable of applying to the multifarious and circumstantiated cases wherein human creatures may be situated; they are somewhat like spiritual substances, which not being the objects of sense, are with difficulty comprehended by the mind; whereas a truly Christian deportment presents our duty to us, in all the diversified circumstances of life. It is, if I may use a bold expression, the system of Christian ethics in an embodied state, rendered the object of our senses. It is, in effect, that lovely form, which Socrates desired to see, *Virtue incarnate*, or clothed with the human shape. Verbal teaching, when it is in its highest perfection, comes as far short of good example, even for conveying just ideas of duty, as a verbal

description of a man's person, to those who never saw him, would fall short of a masterly portrait or statue of him; or as the most elegant account that could be given in words, of the figure, the situation, and the fortifications of a town, would fall short of an accurate map or model of it.

But I further insist, that it not only communicates juster notions, but also more strongly enforces and persuades, than any motives explained and recommended merely by the oratorical powers of the speaker. People are apt to suspect a certain refinement in the precepts of religion, which sets them beyond the reach of mortals. Nay, there are not a few (and none of the worst sort of people neither) who, by their manner of speaking on this subject, appear to consider the precepts of religion as more intended to humble our pride, by making us sensible of our defects, than as meant for a profitable rule, whereby to direct our practice. A Christian example, on the con-

trary, serves to undeceive such persons; shewing us, that those precepts are truly practicable, by such as are earnestly solicitous to practise them; and thereby exciting, in the sincere disciple, a generous solicitude for making diligent advances in the Christian life. In preaching, the arguments you urge, operate on the people's hearts, by means of the understanding. You first work on their opinions and belief, and, by the intervention of these, on their affections and will. In practice, the motives or arguments, at bottom the same, operate by the interposition of sight and experience, which are acknowledged to have a stronger efficacy than opinion and belief. If, in order to avoid some imminent danger, or to attain some valuable end, I must climb a steep and craggy mountain, whose summit is, to appearance, inaccessible; or must pursue my way through some lone and dreary desert; do but shew me the print of a human foot, or rather point out others who appear to

have successfully engaged in the same arduous enterprise, and I shall sooner be prevailed on to attempt it, than by ten thousand arguments. Nay, so irresistible is the charm of virtuous example, that, as degenerate as the world is, it attracts love and veneration every where. This tribute it has often extorted, even from its enemies, the slaves of vice. And, as virtue commands love, love as naturally produces imitation, and thus insensibly assimilates the person loving to the person loved.

I would only, Gentlemen, further urge on this topic, that, beside the influence of example by itself, it adds nerves and energy to public teaching. These two admirably support each other. I have had occasion formerly, oftener than once, to observe to you, that even Pagan critics found it reasonable to establish it as a maxim, that, in order to prove a successful orator, one must be a good man. Yet the subjects on which their eloquence was employed, had,

at best, but a very remote connection with moral goodness. I say not, on the other hand, that this has an intimate connection with the subject of the Christian orator, but, which is a great deal more, that to produce this character in his people is the very object at which he aims. Whatever, therefore, a preacher of exemplary life advances, must come with tenfold advantage from his mouth, as his doctrine and practice correspond. Inconceivable is the ascendency which this single circumstance gives the teacher over the minds of the hearers. They believe the sooner, they are moved the sooner, as they know that the speaker is sincere, that he is in earnest, that he himself believes what he says, that he is anxious about their felicity, and actuated by a hearty desire to promote it. Whereas, without this correspondence, preaching dwindles into form. The careless audience is proof against the strongest motives. They have one unanswerable

reply to all; which, whether true or false, serves alike to render their hearts callous and impregnable to his most vigorous assaults. "He does not himself," say they, "believe what he preaches, else it could "not fail to produce some effect on his "conduct. But preaching is his trade, it "is by it he gains a livelihood." So true it is, that the overseer of others would need to be irreproachable himself. And, indeed, there is implied in this quality, not only the possession and cultivation of every Christian virtue, but such a watchfulness and circumspection on this article, as may serve to secure the purity of his character, untainted, if possible, even by malice itself.

There can be no question, but every vice, whatever, is a real stain in the character of any man, (when duly and impartially considered); much more, in that of a minister of religion. Yet all vices, it must be acknowledged, are not in this

respect equal, nor are the greatest always, in this respect, the worst. When we talk of external blamelessness, we consider immoralities in a particular point of view; not as they are in themselves, and as they affect the disposition of the person who is infected with them, but as they affect his reputation, which is a very different thing. It is on this account that some vices may be justly considered as tending more than others to obstruct the minister's success, notwithstanding that it is the end of his ministry to endeavour, in a certain way, the extirpation of every vice. An inquiry into those vices, which are more especially reproachful or scandalous in the ministerial character, is what I proposed, in the first place, to enter on.

When we examine accurately into the nature of vice, and the different sorts of it which obtain in human characters, we find that they are almost all reducible to these two classes. They are either such

whose viciousness is clearly ascertained by the external action, being manifestly either hurtful to the offender himself, or detrimental to society; or they are such wherein the external action is considered as vicious, no farther than as it proves an indication of some inordinate passion or appetite harboured in the mind. In the former case, the notorious ill tendency of the outward act, constitutes, so to speak, the enormity of the thing, and plainly indicates, at least, the want of virtue and self-command, if not a depraved disposition in the agents. In the latter case, there is generally scope for some variety of construction; inasmuch as the same individual action may be denominated good, or bad, or indifferent, according to the motive which gives rise to it. To the former class belong all criminal indulgences of appetite, whether excessive or irregular, insobriety or incontinence; as, drunkenness, fornication, adultery: add to these,

cursing and swearing, and those other enormities, against which, for the protection of the public, the sanction of human laws has been found a necessary expedient. To the latter class belong those vices of the mind—pride, vanity, covetousness, envy, malice, revenge. There are, perhaps, some vices of an intermediate kind, which participate of the nature of both, inasmuch as they do not always, though they may sometimes, clearly betray the baseness of the motive. Such are, lying and calumny. Between the two classes mentioned, there is this remarkable difference: In the first, the known wickedness and bad tendency of the outward action renders it an evidence, perfectly unequivocal, of the inward depravity which produced it. In the second, wherein the outward actions are regarded purely as signs, there is commonly much ambiguity. They are susceptible of a thousand colours and pretexts, whereby their malignity, unless when it arrives to

an outrageous height, may be disguised, not only from others, but even from the guilty person himself. It is in the midst of these that both hypocrisy and self-deceit have fixed their head-quarters, and made their principal residence; there being here, in most cases, no possibility of determining, with precision, where the lawful point terminates, and the sinful begins. Nay, as we are told concerning the Devil, the prince of darkness, that on certain occasions he transforms himself into an angel of light, so these vices, like the genuine brood of such a parent, often assume the part and denomination of real virtues. Thus the worst dispositions in human nature—malice, envy, and detraction—are sometimes but too successfully made to pass upon the world as a fervent zeal for religion, and a just indignation against vice: Pride gives herself out for an abhorrence of every thing base, or unbecoming one's rank and character; ambition is styled

public spirit, elevation of mind, and magnanimity; and avarice is no other than the necessary and provident care of a family. Whereas, in the other class of vices mentioned, if once the actions themselves are detected, there is no evasion for the guilt; however the crime, in certain circumstances, may be extenuated, it never can be palliated or justified. Besides, it is recognised by every body alike. Hence it proceeds, that in vices, which are the least enormous of this class, there is not a more real, but a more palpable incongruity to the character of a public censor, a teacher of universal righteousness, than in the most heinous of the other. In these, charity demands a favourable construction where possible; and even where one cannot help being convinced of a man's faultiness, there is still some allowance made for self-deceit, which hinders the faulty person from perceiving it himself: whereas the discovery, that one of so

sacred a profession, as that of the Christian pastor, has, for example, been detected in a debauch, is like the detection of a sentinel in the desertion of his post. In either case, the criminal is put to silence, and meets with no indulgence: nor can the one be more conscious of his fault, or of the repugnancy betwixt his conduct and his station, than the other. This therefore must, in the eye of the world, appear a more flagrant, and therefore a more shameful perfidy (the culprit standing as it were convicted), than even those vices, which are, on the whole, of a more malignant nature, and more prejudicial to mankind; but which, at the same time, are of such dubious eviction, that it is impossible, to every body's satisfaction, to ascertain them, or even to distinguish them from those virtues, whose appearance they sometimes assume; and in regard to which, it is often presumable that a man imposes upon himself. In fine, faults of

this kind are but inferred; those of the other kind are perceived: the last fall only under the cognizance of the more intelligent, the first come within the observation even of the most stupid; the latter admit of many subterfuges, the former of none: in these, a man may be self-deceived; in those, he must be self-condemned. Hence the egregious difference which the world makes between them. Hence also it proceeds, that sins of the former class are commonly distinguished by the epithets, scandalous and presumptuous. The sins of the Pharisees, though very heinous, were all of the latter kind. Hence it came to pass, that though worldly, proud, and hypocritical; though they robbed widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers; they nevertheless maintained with the people a very high character in point of sanctity. Under the general denomination of scandals, may also be ranked some of the vices of the tongue. As to

the faults of conversation, which shock the decorum of the ministerial character, the most observable are, whatever offends against piety, and whatever betrays an excessive levity of disposition.

God is both the source and the end of religion; all the principles of it are lights he has imparted to us; the duties are his laws; he is the subject of our faith, the object of our obedience: in announcing the one, and in enforcing the other, the preacher acts in quality of his servant, his herald, as the ancient term properly denotes. The magistrate encourages virtue (wherein piety is comprehended), as necessary for preserving the peace and promoting the good of the community, which is the sole end of government. The moralist inculcates it, as agreeable to human nature in the best sense of the word, as suitable to our discernment of right and wrong: this is the fountain whence all his deductions flow. The preacher enjoins the same thing, as an

obedience due to the commandments of the Creator and Lord of the Universe; and the moral faculty, by him denominated conscience, is only considered as one way by which the Supreme Legislator has made intimation of his will to man; it is considered as a transcript of his law written on our hearts, agreeably to the sentiment of the Apostle. On the other hand, vice is restrained and chastised by the magistrate, as subversive of the quiet and safety of the community: by the moralist it is decried, as a violence done to nature, or an infringement of the rights of that faculty which ought to be the ruling principle in the soul: by the preacher it is inveighed against as *sin*, that is, a transgression of the divine law, of which law the stings of remorse, and all the natural evil consequences of vice, are by him represented as in part the sanction. And as thus every thing is viewed by religion in the peculiar relation it bears to God, whatever shews irreverence

towards the Deity, is levelled against the whole of it. Other sins are, I may say, so many attacks on the different parts of the structure of practical religion; but impiety saps the foundation, and undermines the whole. Other sins, as they shew a contempt, or at least a want of due regard, for the law of God, do indeed obliquely strike at the divine authority; in the same manner as felony, or even any smaller transgression in a body politic, may be said to assail the State itself, of whose laws it is the violation; but impiety is, in the realm of God, the crime of treason, an open attack upon the Supreme power. Hence it follows, that of all vices, this must be the most shocking, as indeed it is the most monstrous, in a minister of religion, whose express charge it is to enforce every other virtue from the love and fear of God. Happily, indeed, the grosser effusions of this vice are now banished the precincts of the higher ranks in society, by the laws of good breeding.

The open profanation of the name of God is hardly ever now to be heard, except among those, who, in all senses, deserve to be denominated the dregs of mankind. It does not more clearly betray a total want of religion, than a total want of good manners.

But, under the head of impiety ought also to be ranked those more common faults, of making light of things sacred, by burlesque allusions, and profane jesting of every kind. Akin to this, but far from being so atrocious, is such an indecent levity of behaviour as savours of habitual thoughtlessness, a thing exceedingly repugnant to a proper sense of the importance of religion. Had not immortality and a future life been yet brought to light by the Gospel, we might (I will not say reasonably, but more plausibly) have said with the voluptuary, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But, as the case is otherwise, and as the present life appears only a state of

preparation and discipline for eternity, every step we take is of unspeakable importance; and whatever betrays a total unconcern of mind, must be extremely unsuitable to the belief of this doctrine. I would not by this be understood as reprehending cheerfulness, urbanity, and good humour, when accompanied with a manly behaviour, and possessed by one of unblameable reputation; these are far from being offensive to the severest judges. On the contrary, a decent and innocent alacrity diffuses a sort of sunshine on a company, exhilarates and gains the hearts of others, and thus does service to religion, by rendering her more amiable and attractive. "Let your conversation," says the Apostle, "always be with grace, seasoned with salt;" by which, as I understand him, he means to combine the engaging qualities with the instructive: like that of the Poet,

"Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci."

On the contrary, any thing morose or

sullen in one's deportment, any thing like hypocritical sourness, can only foster superstition among the ignorant, and give religion an ungainly aspect to the judicious. But as gravity differs widely from moroseness and austerity, so a judicious pleasantness of manner will never be mistaken for a frothy impertinence and folly.

LECTURE II.

REGARD TO THE OUTWARD DECORUM OF CHARACTER IN THINGS NATURALLY INDIFFERENT——DEFERENCE TO THE OPINIONS OF THE PEOPLE——EXTREMES OF UNBOUNDED COMPLIANCE, AND OF VIOLENTLY SHOCKING THEIR PREJUDICES, TO BE AVOIDED.

In my last Lecture, I entered on that branch of the practical part of the Theological course, which regards the observance of propriety of character in the minister. After some remarks, in the way of introduction, on the necessity and unspeakable importance of an exemplary life in one placed in this eminent and sacred office, I entered on the particular consideration of those vices, which are in this character

more especially apt to occasion scandal and reproach. These I observed to be mostly reducible to three articles; first, violations of the known laws of temperance and chastity; secondly, whatever in conversation betrays a want of piety, or of an habitual reverence of God, and regard to his worship; and thirdly, such unguarded levity and folly, as seem to indicate a total indisposition to all serious thought and reflection. When we consider how ill-suited, or rather how repugnant, this conduct is to the serious temper of religion, we cannot justly wonder at the stress that is commonly laid, even on a circumstance which is so little minded in persons whose business is merely secular.

This naturally leads me to consider another point, which will be found of no small moment, when duly attended to; though to certain superficial thinkers it often appears as a matter of no consequence at all; I mean, a proper regard to

those outward decorums of character in things naturally indifferent, which owe their establishment purely to custom, and the general sentiments of the people amongst whom we live. In every sort of profession this obtains in some degree, but more, it must be acknowledged, in that of the minister, than in any other. Who does not perceive, that a dress, and even a manner, which might not be thought unbefitting a young officer, would be exceedingly indecent in a magistrate or judge? A violation of such decorums in any character tends to bring down the person in the esteem of the world, and thereby to lessen his influence; but so much more delicate in this respect is the sacred function, that the like violation in the Christian pastor will sometimes prove sufficient to make him either detested or despised. If we consider matters abstractly, nothing is more indifferent than the colour of one's clothes. And though there may be some

difference in point of convenience, yet, in point of virtue, we cannot say that one particular cut or form of garment is in its nature better or more moral than another. Yet it is possible for any man, without impairing conveniency, to dress himself out in such a manner, as will make every one who sees him conclude that he is mad. So far in general are we all satisfied, that in many things, in themselves originally indifferent,—dress, language, address, forms of civility, and the like,—the custom of the country where we reside is a rule, which, by those who would live in society, and be accounted members of it, ought to be inviolably adhered to. And this is not less true of all the particular customs (in themselves harmless, for this must always be supposed) which obtain in particular stations, than in those more general ones which obtain in the whole community. Thus, when I examine the matter, independently of the usages of the world, it is

not in my power to discover a greater suitableness in the doctrines of Christianity to the colour of black, than to that of green, of purple, or of scarlet. Yet, if I should take the fancy of preaching those doctrines in a suit of any of the three last-mentioned colours, I should certainly deserve to be hooted by the congregation.

Further, when I recur to Holy Writ itself, I find nothing which, in matters of this kind, gives a preference to one mode above another. Nevertheless, though neither reason nor Scripture decides in favour of any particulars merely circumstantial, both reason and Scripture concur in supporting the general maxim, that in such things we ought to be absolutely determined by the notions of propriety and decorum generally entertained by the people. This is manifestly a dictate of reason, which plainly shews us that such conformity is productive of no bad consequences, whilst an opposition in this particular is necessarily

attended with scandal. It is not less clearly a dictate of Holy Writ. Is it not represented as our duty by the Apostle, (2 Cor. viii. 21.) that we "provide things "honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, "but also in the sight of men?—Προ- "νοουμενοι καλα ου μονον ενωπιον Κυριου, αλλα και ενωπιον "ανθρωπων."—If by the καλα, the *honesta*, the decent, the becoming, the Apostle had here only meant things originally and essentially moral, the addition of the last clause, "but also in the sight of men," would have been at least unnecessary; because, in fact, it could make no addition to the sense, inasmuch as every thing naturally moral is comely in the sight of the Lord, and approved by him. Nay, on that supposition, the last clause would be worse than unnecessary; it would convey a false and very dangerous sentiment, as though any thing essentially immoral, if it were not for considerations merely human, would be permitted, or not disapproved, of

God. As it stands, it plainly intimates, that, in matters of an indifferent nature in themselves, we ought strictly to accommodate ourselves to the ideas which prevail at the time when, and in the place where, we happen to reside, and which constitute what is "honest in the sight of men." However much this particular mode, or that, is in its nature originally and equally innocent, custom, and the opinion of the world, make a real difference to those who must live in the world, and whose usefulness in a great measure depends on their conforming to such opinions. In things so evident, I should not have been so particular, if there had not appeared, sometimes among young persons, who, in this country, have entered into the holy ministry, a silly affectation, in point of dress, of some of the fashionable fopperies; which, however excusable in other youths, is universally condemned in them, as unbecoming the gravity of their function. It is mere

trifling in these people to plead, that it is inconceivable that hair fashionably dressed, for example, should be more irreligious than a periwig. This we readily acknowledge, when we abstract from the opinions of the world; and the same, doubtless, may be said of a laced coat, or of a hat and feather. I believe, however, that few of those reasoners themselves would think proper to carry the matter so far as this. Yet they ought to observe, that if their argument be conclusive in the one case, it is equally so in the other. The logical rule is certainly a good one,—*Majus et minus non variant speciem*. But the case, when justly stated, stands thus:—There is a degree of irreligion in gratifying a silly humour of our own, at the expense of our usefulness:—There is something immoral, in wantonly raising in the minds of the people an obstruction to the success of our ministry.

But, say they, it is only the common people that will be affected by such trifling

prejudices. Admit it were so. Does it become the Christian pastor to undervalue even the meanest Christian? Does it become the servant to despise those whom his Master died to redeem? Are not the secular distinctions of high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, as it were, totally levelled in the impartial regards of religion? "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." But, in fact, the plea is not less false than inconclusive. People are, and must be, universally influenced in their sentiments of decorum and propriety, in matters originally indifferent, by the received usages of the country. It ever has been, and it ever will be, considered as a sure evidence of a frivolous mind, when a man affects by trifles to distinguish himself from others of the same rank and profession. Nor do I, in the least, scruple to acknowledge myself one of those vulgar, who cannot help judging, from any remarkable appearances on the outside, of the furniture within.

I hinted before, that in most stations of consequence, by the general but tacit consent of the people, certain ideas of propriety and decorum have obtained. Nor can these ever be violated with absolute impunity, whilst the esteem and respect of those with whom we live is of any account to us. But in no character is the violation of such decorums so hurtful, as in the ministerial; for not only is there no character in which an attention to propriety is so much expected, but there is none in which it is of so great moment. I have once and again mentioned the magistrate and judge, as being the nearest, in this respect, to the Christian instructor. But, even here, the different influence of the neglect of propriety is very considerable. This will immediately be discovered, on attending to the means, by which these professions severally attain their respective ends. The means employed by the judge or magistrate is force; he beareth not the sword in vain.

The means made use of by the minister is persuasion: "Knowing the terrors of the "Lord, we persuade men;" and, "We "beseech you in Christ's stead, that you "be reconciled to God." Now, suppose the magistrate, senator, or judge, should, both in garb and behaviour, be an arrant fop, he would no doubt degrade himself in the esteem of the world by his conduct, and do some hurt to others, inasmuch as he inevitably lessens the respect that is due to the office he bears, and even to the administration of public justice; but if he regards equity in his public conduct, the evil is comparatively inconsiderable. All the instruments by which he operates are equally efficacious, as they would be under the direction of the wisest and the gravest person in the world: his serjeants and officers are just as capable of apprehending criminals; his prisons as secure for detaining them; the fines he imposes will in the same manner affect the pockets of delinquents,

and the scourge of the executioner their backs. Next to that of the magistrate, the character of the physician, a man intrusted with what so nearly concerns his fellow citizens, as their health and safety, does, in the general estimation, in point of decency, require the exterior of gravity and wisdom. But however much the want of this may affect his own reputation, it will not in the least hurt the efficacy of his prescriptions. The emetics and cathartics, which he administers, will have precisely the same effect upon the patients as if they were administered by a man of the most consummate gravity and of the sagest appearance in the world. The case is totally different with the spiritual physician: the great engine by which he operates is persuasion: and of so delicate a nature is this, that whatever affects the character of the person that uses it, does, upon those on whom it is used, intimately affect the operation. If they entertain either a low opinion of his un-

derstanding, or, which is still worse, a bad opinion of his disposition, they will be deaf to all he says. And even put the case, that his knowledge and his behaviour, in other and more material respects, are unexceptionable, if people are once made to believe that he despises their judgment, and is careless what they think, this will as effectually obstruct his influence upon them as the other. And I acknowledge, that there can hardly be a stronger evidence that he despises their judgment, than the being so wedded to trifles, by himself acknowledged to be indifferent, in opposition, not only to their sentiments, but to the general sentiments of the country.

But it may not be improper here to observe, that though I have all along admitted, that the particular things established, as it were, by general but tacit consent, are naturally indifferent, and the preference that is given to one usage above

another originally arbitrary, yet there is a real foundation in Nature for the exterior distinctions that are made in different characters and professions, and in the general principles that obtain, in regard to propriety and decorum. For instance, who would hesitate to acknowledge, that the puckered ruffs worn round the neck, even by the ministers of religion, in the beginning of the last[1] century, were equally good with the band in use at present; or that ruffles at the wrists would be as proper as either, if Custom had been pleased to give her sanction? The differences in this respect often arise from merely accidental circumstances, which, if it were always possible, it is not worth while to investigate. But I maintain, that the general principles of distinction are founded in the nature of things: and to those principles the prevailing taste (unless when

(1) The seventeenth.

a total depravation of sentiments and manners reigns) will always be conformable. You will never find, that, in any age or country, people can be brought to think, that those, whose profession is of a serious and important nature, should be fitted out in a light and gaudy dress; or, contrariwise, that those whose occupation is comparatively trivial, like that of a dancing master, should be robed in all the solemnity of a judge. In like manner we may justly say, Does not even Nature teach us thus much, that those whose occupation it is to call us, both by example and by teaching, to set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth, should not, by their very habit and accoutrements, give us ocular demonstration of the value they put on the glitter and vanities of life? It is therefore to the idea, that is justly entertained, of the end, the dignity, and the consequence of the sacred function, that we ought to attribute this

effect, that ministers are more circumscribed than others by the sentiments of the world, in respect of dress, diversions, and some other things of small moment. To the same cause it is also to be ascribed, that very often what is not in the least excepted against in others, is universally deemed misbecoming and incongruous in them. This judgment, from what has been already said, appears to have a foundation, not in prejudice, but in nature, and therefore ought not to be contemned. If we sincerely pursue the good of mankind, we shall studiously avoid whatever may, by taking off from the weight of our doctrine, or lessening the influence of our example, obstruct our progress.

This brings me directly to the consideration of *offence*, in its utmost latitude. I have hitherto only considered it in those things, wherein there is a violation of the universal sentiments and usages of the country where we live. But the obligation

the pastor is under, to avoid giving offence, is by no means to be restrained to those few particulars which have obtained, if I may so express myself, the sanction of the national suffrage. Many things it is often proper to do, and many more it is requisite to forbear, from a regard to the opinions of the people, or, perhaps, but a part of the people of the parish with which the pastor is concerned. This, I own, is a subject of a very nice and delicate nature. There is a real danger, and a very considerable danger, in the extremes on either side: and it will often require the utmost prudence to ascertain the just limits, that we may neither, on the one hand, by an unbounded compliance, render ourselves the slaves of their caprice, and appear weak and undetermined in the eyes of the wiser and the better part; nor, on the other hand, by violently shocking deep-rooted prejudices, through an immoderate tenaciousness of things of no value, destroy

our influence upon them in matters of the highest concern. Even natural reason, and the common rules of prudence, indicate something faulty in each extreme,—the excess, and the defect. If we recur to the dictates of our holy religion, it is evident, that the Christian law requires of us all,—not of pastors only, but even of all the disciples of Jesus, and that upon the most solid grounds,—that "we bear with, "and forbear one another in love;" that such of us "as are strong," and have more enlarged views of things, "ought to bear "the infirmities of the weak, and not to "please ourselves." It requires, by consequence, that we abstain from such things as are in themselves innocent, when we know that they are accounted by others unlawful; and when we have reason to conclude, that, by our acting in a different manner, and indulging ourselves in such things, they would be shocked at our boldness; and that thus our example and

admonitions, however edifying in other respects, would be rendered unprofitable, and even offensive to them.

This injunction, however, has not entirely escaped censure. It has been deemed, by some, unreasonably rigid, in the self-denial it imposes; nay, which is worse, as tending to nourish prejudices, and foster superstition among the people. But that the precept, in the proper construction and suitable application, gives no ground for this imputation, will appear, I am persuaded, on the most cursory review. A moderate share of experience may convince us, that it is not a violent opposition to popular errors, which is the way to remove them; that this, on the contrary, proves often the surest way to rivet them in their minds. "In order effectually to "extirpate superstitious notions, the peo-"ple must be managed," said a late ingenious divine, "as infants are managed "in regard to their rattles and other play-

" things. These, if ye attempt to wrest " out of their hands, they will cry and " grasp them more tenaciously than be- " fore. But if you do not mind them, " they come naturally to forget these " things, and will soon drop them of their " own accord." Now, the bare abstaining from any gratification can never be made to imply that one deems it sinful, and so cannot be construed by the people into an approbation of any popular mistake. But let us hear the apostle Paul's opinion on this subject, which, I am hopeful, to every impartial person, will appear decisive. " I know," says he, (Rom. xiv. 14.) " and " am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that " nothing is unclean of itself." Again, " Meat commendeth us not to God; nei- " ther, if we eat, are we the better; nor if " we forbear, are we the worse." Such things, then, are quite indifferent in themselves, when we abstract from the opinions of mankind; but if once these are taken into

the account, the case, according to the Apostle, is altered; what before was harmless, becomes instantly pernicious. "Nevertheless," says he, "if thy brother be "grieved with thy meat, now walkest "thou not charitably: destroy not him "with thy meat, for whom Christ died." And in regard to himself, he adds, "If "meat make my brother offend, I will not "eat flesh whilst the world standeth, lest "I make my brother to offend." Nothing can be more explicit than these words, wherein, at the same time, is conveyed the reason of the precept. Acting otherwise, he tells us, opposeth charity: "Now "walkest thou not charitably." By your example, you either embolden your brother to do what is contrary to his conscience, and therefore sinful in him; "for "to him that esteemeth any thing to be "unclean, to him it is unclean;" and, "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." Or, if he be not emboldened, by your example, to

transgress the dictates of his own conscience, you make him look upon you as, in some degree at least, daring and impious; you so far mar the union which ought to subsist among Christians; and render your conversation unedifying to him, though ever so exemplary in other instances; you do what you can to destroy your brother. To abstain, in such cases, is therefore a duty incumbent on every Christian, if charity itself is so. But that there is, resulting from their station, a peculiar obligation on the teachers of religion, must appear, from considering the nature and the end of their office, as well as of the means by which the end must be attained. But this topic has been so particularly illustrated already, that it will be improper now to resume it. Indeed, it may be said with truth, that though we abstract from Christianity altogether, no social intercourse in civilized life can for any time be conducted by us to mutual

satisfaction, without accommodating ourselves in smaller matters to the opinions of those with whom we live; and even without such self-denials as making sacrifices sometimes of our own pleasures to the gratification of others, which naturally produce in them similar and reciprocal concessions. This principle is so important, that it is justly regarded as fundamental to true politeness. And shall a principle of complaisance, comparatively trivial, whose utmost transitory aim is to smooth conversation, by filing off, if I may so express myself, the external asperities of our humours; shall this, I say, have greater influence on the men of the world, than Christian charity (whose aim is a thing so permanent, as the culture of virtue in the soul, and its preparation for eternal felicity) has on the disciple of Jesus, or even on his minister?

When I first entered on this article, I acknowledged, that it is however possi-

ble, that one may err here by excess, as well as by defect. It may therefore be thought reasonable, to say a few things, before I conclude the subject, on the proper bounds of this duty. Much attention and discretion are requisite here. In order to assist us in this particular, let us always keep the end in view, which is, the improvement of the people in religion and virtue. "Let every one of us," says Paul, "please his neighbour, for his good to "edification. For even Christ pleased not "himself." Here the end is plainly pointed out, "his good to edification;" that is, his moral and spiritual improvement. Let this, therefore, in the first place, be carefully attended to. Let us impartially weigh the consequences on both sides, particularly with regard to the people themselves. Persons will sometimes deny themselves many things, whose sole and ultimate end is popular favour and applause. When that is the case, the sacrifice is made by

such persons, solely to themselves, to their own vanity and ambition: self is the idol, at whose shrine they offer: they yield the gratification of a weaker passion, only to a stronger, which happens to interfere. This is, indeed, commonly all that is proposed in the polite intercourse of those called 'People of fashion.' Concessions are made by each party, ultimately with a view to itself, that equal concessions may be made by the other. The consciousness that each side has of this effect of their pliancy, brings about a reciprocal acquiescence in so expedient a compromise. But in the true Christian, the advancement of the good of others is his great object. This was ever in the view of the great Apostle; who not only has most particularly laid down our duty in this respect, but was himself an eminent example of it. "*Though I be free "from all men,*" says he, "*yet have I made "myself servant to all.*" For what end? "*that I might gain the more...*To the Jews

" I became as a Jew, that I might gain the " Jews; to them that are under the law, as " under the law, that I might gain them " that are under the law; to them that are " without law, as without law, (being not " without law to God, but under the law " to Christ,) that I might gain them that " are without law. To the weak became " I as weak, that I might gain the weak. " I am made all things to all men,"—wherefore? " that I might by all means save " some." Thus the great end was their spiritual recovery and final salvation. And when this end is constantly kept in view, it will serve to secure against another faulty excess; which is, making compliances in things not really indifferent, but sinful. A man, whose aim is the indulgence of vainglory by popular applause, will often go so far as to make sinful compliances. But that man, who regulates himself by the only end allowed by our religion, never will: for such unrighteous compliances tend mani-

festly to the subversion, and not to the salvation, of men's souls. The same apostle, notwithstanding his unbounded complacency in things indifferent, where a good end could be answered, was like a rock, perfectly immoveable, in every case where yielding would have been sinful. "Do I "yet please men?" says he: "is that my "ultimate aim, right or wrong? If I yet "pleased men, I should not be the servant "of Christ." A third observation I shall make, is, that much prudence is requisite for enabling us to judge both of the things themselves, in which it is our duty to give way to their prejudices, and likewise of the manner of doing it, on which, commonly, as much depends as on the thing done.

I shall only add at present, that two extremes ought carefully to be avoided; either such an officious ostentation of your forwardness to gratify them, as looks like a Pharisaical vain-glory in courting their applause; or such a reluctance, as would

destroy the value of a much greater sacrifice. The manner ought to be easy and natural; such as shews, that what we do neither costs us any effort, nor are we in the least disposed to make a merit of it. The ancient saying, '*Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia,*' has a very important meaning. It holds also in the converse, '*Nullum numen adest, ni sit prudentia.*' Or, to give a Christian turn to the sentiment, we may say, Every virtue will attain its end, when conducted by prudence; as, on the contrary, No virtue will answer its end, where prudence is wanting to direct it. Is not the same lesson, in effect, taught us in more emphatic terms by our blessed Lord, where he commands us to join the wisdom of the serpent to the innocence of the dove. As the latter is necessary for preserving the former from degenerating into low cunning and artifice; so the former is necessary to serve the latter, both as a guide, and as

a guard. But I shall not enter further into the subject at present, as I shall have occasion to resume it, when I come to consider how far popularity ought to be an object to the Christian pastor.

LECTURE III.

VIRTUES ESPECIALLY REQUISITE IN THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR——MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY——OBLIGATION TO THESE DUTIES, FROM THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST; FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF THE END OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, AND OF THE MEANS WHICH THE MINISTER IS AUTHORIZED TO EMPLOY, FOR ATTAINING THE END OF HIS MISSION.

I NOW proceed to the second thing proposed; namely, to consider what those virtues are, of which the business of a Christian pastor requires especially the cultivation and exertion. For it is the lowest object of the Christian pastor, who is called to be an ensample to the flock, that he do not scandalize those, by his vice and indifference, whom he is under the most

sacred obligations to cherish and to guide. But may it not be said, and justly said, that there is no virtue whatever, which does not require to be cultivated and exerted by every Christian, more especially by every Christian pastor? Without the love of God and of our neighbour, there is no such thing as true religion; unless, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we live soberly, and righteously, and piously in the world, we are not taught of God, nor are our lives regulated by the Gospel of his Son. But, notwithstanding this great and important truth, there are some particular virtues (which are all, indeed, but different emanations from the same copious fountain, Christian charity) that one station more frequently requires the exercise of; and others that are more frequently requisite in another. None will doubt, that to the opulent and powerful there is a stronger call to the duties of almsgiving, hospitality, and generosity: to the weak and

indigent, on the contrary, there is more frequent occasion for exercising patience and resignation. The trading and busy part of mankind are more especially required to attend to the inflexible laws of justice in their dealings: and those, to whose valour the protection of the society is intrusted, are in a particular manner obliged to exercise the virtues of fortitude and resolution. Yet all these still continue to be real virtues in every man; though, in one profession, the occasions of exerting some of them are more frequent, and the actual exertions more important; and in other professions, the same thing holds in regard to other virtues. Now, in the Christian pastor, though no duty of the Christian life can be dispensed with, I intend not here to inculcate those that are fundamental to all religion. I will rather suppose, that their evident necessity is sufficient to recommend them to all those, who sincerely purpose to honour God, and

promote the interests of virtue by their ministry. There are, however, certain qualities of temper, that regard our external behaviour, and the manner of treating the persons with whom we are concerned; which, though too little attended to, by the generality even of pastors, are of unspeakable consequence in respect of the influence they have on our success.

The first in this way that I would recommend to your particular attention, is, the virtue of *meekness*, both as it stands opposed to anger, and as it stands opposed to pride; in which last view it is also denominated *humility*. It is but too common a method of distinguishing, which, in less or more, has infected the language of all classes of men, to consider the excesses of the passions rather as infirmities than as faults, or as what in any degree affects the moral character. How often have we occasion to hear it said, 'Such a one is a very good man, he is free from every vice; but

then he has no command of his temper?' He flies out into a rage, often on the merest trifles; is utterly impatient of contradiction; or is, perhaps, fretful and peevish under every the smallest cross or trouble that befalls him. I must acknowledge that this manner of speaking does not at all suit the notion I have of the spirit and genius of our religion. I will freely admit, that a man may be passionate, and even, to a certain degree, resentful; he may be envious and discontented; and yet may be free from many vices; nay, he may even have some good qualities or virtues;—he may, nevertheless, be sober; he may be honest; he may, in the vulgar, narrow acceptation of the word, be charitable, that is, he may give alms to the poor; nay more, he may have some serious impressions of religion. I will acknowledge further, that I should prefer a man of this character, notwithstanding his violence, to one of the most placid temper, who was destitute of com-

mon honesty, and had no regard to God. But this is far from implying that there is not real vice, or moral pravity, in such unbridled passions. And I must acknowledge, that to me it is extremely evident, that no one thing has more contributed to the neglect of this part of moral culture, the discipline of the passions, than the light manner in which many, who, I doubt not, are themselves sincere Christians, speak of this subject.

But it may be worth while to examine the matter a little nearer. Is not the want of any real virtue whatever to be considered as vicious? Most vices, when examined to the bottom, will be found to consist merely in privation, or the want of those good qualities or virtues, by which the passions are restrained, and our intentions regulated. Now, what is a more essential virtue to the Christian than charity? rather, what virtue can remain in the character where this is wanting, which is "the end of the com-

" mandment, the fulfilling of the law, the " bond of perfectness;" and without which, the apostle Paul assures us, whatever be our attainments in knowledge and in faith, in miraculous gifts, or in the exteriors of virtue, we are absolutely nothing? But it will perhaps be said, Why should charity be thought to be affected by those transient fits of choler and ill-humour, which have not a permanent foundation in the mind? I shall only say, in answer, Consider, I pray you, the character of that lovely form, that heavenly grace, not as too commonly misunderstood, but as delineated by the inspired Apostle,—and see, whether it be possible to reconcile it with the violence and outrage of a choleric temper. " Charity," says he, " suffereth long, and is " kind; charity vaunteth not itself, is not " puffed up, doth not behave itself un- " seemly, is not easily provoked, thinketh " no evil; beareth all things, hopeth all " things, endureth all things." Is it pos-

sible to conceive a greater contrast, than there is in this description, to the violence of rage, which, in features and complexion, has more the aspect of an infernal fury, than of any of the graces of the Spirit? Could we better delineate this temper, than by affirming of it what is denied of charity, and denying what is affirmed? 'Wrath, then, 'or unbridled anger,' I should say, 'far 'from being long suffering and benign, is 'impatient and fierce; it is boastful and 'elated, behaveth itself most unseemly, is 'easily provoked, and ever suspicious of ill-'intention; beareth nothing, hopeth no-'thing, endureth nothing.'

But it may be said, Would you then altogether exclude from the grace of charity the man addicted to anger? Would not this be rather judging uncharitably? In answer to this, I freely own, that all our virtues here are imperfect, that in many things we all offend: and it becomes not us, whose knowledge, in most

things, is superficial, to pronounce decisively as to the degrees of any fault or vice which are absolutely incompatible with the possession of the opposite virtue, and thence to conclude concerning the state of individuals in God's account. This belongs only to the Searcher of hearts. But we are fully warranted to determine in regard to the quality of things, though not in regard to the state of persons; as, for example, what conduct and what actions are either conformable or repugnant to the Christian virtues. And, indeed, without this power, it were impossible that the accounts given us in Scripture of our duty could be of the smallest use to us, as we could not with safety make any application of them to practice. We are therefore authorized to say of every fit of intemperate anger, that if it do not shew a total want of charity, it betrays at least a great deficiency in that Christian grace. What has greatly contributed to this ill-founded

distinction, which most unnaturally cuts off the stronger passions, or those called *irascible*, from any share in moral culture, (which they seem to think confined to the concupiscible affections,) is an erroneous, but very general opinion, that every attempt to remedy the former is vain, and the thing itself utterly impracticable. How common is it to hear people say, 'He 'is a very good sort of man, but exceed-'ingly ill-tempered: but as to that, it is 'his misfortune, and not his fault, for who 'can change his temper?' Thus they seem to think, that any thing faulty here is on a footing with any natural infirmity or corporeal imperfection, like a defect of symmetry in the features of one's face, or a disproportion of the parts in the make of the body. Nothing can contribute more to render those mental diseases incurable, than such a groundless notion, that they cannot be cured; for will any man in his senses seriously attempt what he

believes to be impossible? But it would be easy to shew, were this a proper occasion, from the prodigious effects upon the passions, of principles, example, and early care in education, that there is no impossibility in the matter.[1]

But further, Are the promises of the Gospel ever made to mere natural qualities, which are not capable of being subjected to moral culture? Is there any promise of reward announced to a superior reach of understanding, to a retentive memory, to a fruitful imagination, or to the beauty of the external form, to the acuteness of the bodily senses, to the agility of the

(1) Here the Author obviated an argument against his doctrine, that has been urged from an expression that twice occurs in the New Testament; and shewed that it arose merely from the mis-translation of a Greek word. The passages are, Acts xiv. 15. "We also are men of like passions with you." And James v. 17. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are."——For the Author's remarks on these passages, see his Work on the Gospels, Dissertation IV. section 25.

limbs, or to the strength of the muscles? Every one, at first sight, perceives the absurdity of the supposition. Nothing that is not a subject of moral discipline can, properly, be either rewarded or punished. And to be a subject of discipline, necessarily implies that the thing which is so may be improved by proper care and attention, and may become worse by neglect. Now to what one Christian grace are more of the promises addressed, than to this of meekness? Providence, in this life, by the accounts of Sacred Writ, seems to be peculiarly employed about the meek; the retributions of hereafter seem to be particularly secured to them: — "The "meek shall eat and be satisfied, and shall "inherit the earth: the meek, God will "guide in judgment." "When God "ariseth, to visit the sons of men, it is, that "he may lift up, and save, all the meek of "the earth." Again, "The meek he will "beautify with salvation." Accordingly,

it is to persons of this character that one of those beatitudes is pronounced, with which our Lord's public ministry, as a teacher, was introduced: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Meekness is often taken notice of as an eminent characteristic of the spirit and temper of Jesus; and it is always represented and recommended as holding a principal place among the virtues which are the blessed effects of his religion. It is enumerated among the "fruits of the Spirit." It is said to be "an ornament, "which is, in the sight of God, of great "price;" and marked as a criterion of "the wisdom which is from above." Now, if it is a matter so essential to the whole Christian life, and therefore incumbent on every disciple of Jesus, how much more is it necessary in the Christian pastor? It is so particularly adapted to give success to the means, which he is required to employ; it is so suitable to the very end

of his calling, and will be so naturally expected from those who consider the character of the Master whom he serves, that any thing of a contrary nature must greatly diminish the respect due to his office, and lessen the influence of his ministry among the people.

Permit me, Gentlemen, to offer a few things, on each of the preceding considerations. I shall begin with the last, the character of the Master whom he serves; and, in imitation of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, shall, before every thing, beseech or conjure you, by the meekness and the gentleness of Christ, that ye be like-minded towards all men. Meekness and humility, which, if not co-incident, are very near akin, constitute the first recommendation, whereby Jesus Christ, the true and faithful Witness for God, chose to engage attention to his divine lessons: "Come unto me," says he, "all ye that labour and are heavy "laden, and I will give you rest. Take

" my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for " I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye " shall find rest unto your souls." And how perfectly does the whole of his conduct illustrate this feature in his character? It would, indeed, be to transcribe the greater part of his history, to produce all the evidences of this important truth. I shall only attempt to display it, as it shone forth, on some special occasions, in his conduct; and that, first, to his Disciples; secondly, to the people; and thirdly, to his enemies.

In regard to his Disciples, how long had he to wrestle with their incredulity, their inveterate prejudices, their inattention, and, in consequence thereof, the slowness of their progress, and even their worldly and interested hopes! How gently did he insinuate his heavenly doctrine, as they were able to bear it, into their minds! How gradually did he open to them the spiritual nature of that kingdom of right-

cousness which he came to establish upon the earth! When the ambition of two of his Disciples, very improperly (not to say indecently) displayed, had excited the indignation of the rest against them,—whilst their Divine Master, firmly, but mildly, checks the presumption of the offending brothers, how tenderly does he conciliate the minds of them all to one another, by calling them all unto him, and giving to the whole society a most needful lesson of humility, meekness, and mutual love! How strongly afterwards does he, by his example, enforce the instructions he had so often given them, to be humble and mutually serviceable in every thing in their power, when he did not disdain, for this purpose, to wash their feet! When the last great scene of his sufferings came on, when he was together with his Disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane,—the night wherein he was to be seized by his enemies, the night of his dreadful agony,—even then,

when all earthly comfort forsook him, he seemed to find at least some abatement to his sorrows from the sympathy and conversation of his chosen Disciples. This appears sufficiently evident, from the earnestness with which he entreats that they would "tarry and watch with him:" yet even this small consolation is denied him. And when, oftener than once, he finds them asleep, notwithstanding his earnest entreaty, and notwithstanding the uncommon anguish with which they had seen him struggling, how soft, how delicate, is the reproof he gives! "What," says he, "could ye not watch with me one hour?" Yet, as if afraid that even this were too severe, he seems willing to retract it, and with the very next breath pleads their apology, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak;" which is as much as to say, 'Why should I reproach you? I am sensible 'that this conduct in you ought to be im-'puted rather to bodily infirmity than to

'want of affection for me. It is difficult, next 'to impossible, for the most candid mind to 'preserve an entire moderation and evenness 'in judging, when agonizing under the most 'complicated distress.' Where is the man, who, in such a situation, can, like our honoured Master, make allowances for any thing that looks like insensibility, coldness, or neglect, in the friend whom he loves and cherishes? Again, after his resurrection, and after the great and shameful transgression of Peter, knowing the real repentance and deep contrition of that Disciple, he is graciously pleased to distinguish him by name, in the message which the angel, by his order, gave the women: "Go," says he, "tell his Disciples, and tell Peter." Not that Peter's behaviour entitled him to so honourable a distinction; but this benignant Master well knew, that the consciousness of his late gross prevarication and baseness, which then overwhelmed the mind of that Disciple, would make him dread

that he were excluded from the number, and no more to be honoured with the name of Disciple, unless he had been particularly mentioned. Jesus therefore chooses, in this affectionate manner, to prevent, as it were, his application, and to take the very first occasion of signifying his pardon and his grace.

In regard to the people, the patience and meekness with which our Lord endured hunger and thirst, fatigue, both of body and mind, day and night, whenever he had an opportunity of administering relief to their bodies, or instruction to their souls,—and that without uttering the least complaint, or a single word that savoured of repining,—is perfectly unexampled. No experienced obstinacy, no former ingratitude on their part, did ever provoke him to let slip any new opportunity, which Providence presented to him, of doing them good. And, even with respect to his enemies, or those who shewed themselves on any occasion

hostile to his pretensions and views, whatever warmth he displays when the immediate attack is on the law and honour of God, yet, when it is his own person that is aimed at, the same unconquerable meekness is uniformly displayed. Witness the check he gave to two of his Disciples, who, on occasion of the inhospitable treatment he had received from the Samaritans, owing to their bigotry, as well as the inveterate hatred they bore to his nation, asked his permission to call down fire from heaven to consume them; pleading, in this, the example of Elijah:—"But," says the sacred historian, "he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye "know not what manner of spirit ye are of; "for the Son of Man is not come to destroy "men's lives, but to save them." Again, consider the reception that he gave to those who were sent to apprehend him. How great his clemency, who could even work a miracle for the cure of one of those ministers of tyranny that had been assaulted with

the sword, with more zeal than prudence, by one of his Disciples! How benignly did he surrender himself, capitulating, as it were, only for the safety of his friends! "If ye seek me, let these go their way." In his behaviour, first before the Sanhedrim, and afterwards before the tribunal of a heathen judge, how uniformly is the same character supported! Need I take notice of the mildness of his answer, who when he was struck, without a shadow of cause or provocation, by one of the officers, and upbraided as having replied improperly to the high priest, said in return: "If I have "spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but "if well, why smitest thou me?" How beautifully and how truly is his conduct, in this particular, delineated by the Prophet! "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter; "and as a sheep before her shearers is "dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Nor was his silence of that sort, which is sometimes to be seen in real criminals,—proud, sullen, obstinate: quite the reverse. When

to answer was suitable, he never failed to do it, both to the chief priests and to Pilate. When it could promote no purpose but a bad one, he remained silent. When he did reply, it was always with that intrepid firmness, on the one hand, that became the great Interpreter of God; and with that condescending benignity on the other, that suited the gracious Saviour of men;—equally distant, in both, from the fawning adulation of the timid culprit, and from the haughty insolence of the vindictive sufferer. All his disciples are called upon (and do not we account ourselves of the number?) to "consider him, who endured such con-"tradiction of sinners against himself; who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; "and when he suffered, threatened not; lest "they be weary, and faint in their minds."

But surely, my young friends, there is a stronger and a louder call to those, who have it in prospect to be shepherds of the flock of Christ, under him, the chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, to imitate.

in their own behaviour, that example, which it is their duty and business, in the warmest manner, and by all possible means, to recommend to others. This, too, is that of all his virtues which seems the fittest to be begun with, as being the most attractive, and the most level to common apprehension and notice. His perfect resignation, in all circumstances, to the will of God, exhibits him as truly venerable; his superiority to ignominy and torture, as heroic; his boundless mercy and forgiveness, manifested in his intercession for his enemies, in the very moment of his suffering by their hands, as superior to human, and completely godlike; his clemency and meekness present him to us in the most amiable and engaging light. Other parts of his character command our reverence and awe; it is this which powerfully draws us with the cords of love. I have been more particular than I intended on this first obligation, the example of their Master, which the ministers

of Jesus lie under, to obtain the command of their passions, especially the wrathful passions, so exceedingly ill suited to the character of Him, in whose service they are engaged.[1]

But have we not the best authority to affirm, that anger sometimes may be innocent, or, what is more, commendable; since even the meek, the patient, and the humble Jesus, could, on certain occasions, be moved to anger? I acknowledge the justness of the observation, nor did I ever mean to advance any thing inconsistent with it: it is only, when the passion is irregular or excessive, that religion obliges us to restrain it. It

(1) Here the Author considered two passages in the Gospel History, which appear at first not perfectly compatible with the meekness attributed to our Lord. The first is in Matt. xvi. 23. where he says to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan." See the Author's remarks on the term *Satan*, in his Work on the Gospels, Dissertation VI.——The other passage is in Luke vi. 24, 25, 26. See the Author's note on the place in the same Work, where he shews clearly, that the *woe* pronounced by our Lord is the voice of lamentation, and not of wrath.

may be irregular, either in respect of the *cause* that excites it, or the *manner* in which it shews itself; and even though the cause be a just one, it may be excessive in *degree*. The cause of our anger is most commonly our pride; and the occasion, some real or supposed injury or affront. The anger of our Blessed Master will uniformly be found to have been excited, by an insult committed, not immediately against himself, but directly against the Divine Majesty, and manifestly tending to the contempt of God's authority, and the dishonour of his law. When the attack was levelled against his person,—although in this it may be justly said, that the honour of the Father, who sent him, was at least indirectly attacked,—yet, as here there was some scope for the plea of ignorance, or their mistaking his character, he bore the worst that malice could inflict with the most unexampled meekness. He ever seemed to suffer more on their account, who were capable of com-

mitting such wickedness, than for himself, on whom it was so largely wreaked: witness his affecting lamentation, accompanied with tears, over Jerusalem, the place where he had ever met with the basest indignities and ingratitude, and the place which he well knew was to be the scene of his last horrible catastrophe, at that time so near. And even in those passages, where the Evangelists represent him as moved to anger by the obduracy of those around him, they never fail to shew us that his anger was tempered, and in fact surmounted, by a compassionate concern for the offenders: "He looked "round about on them with anger, being "grieved for the hardness of their hearts." I acknowledge, that there is no passion or appetite in the human frame which, considered in itself, is sinful: none of them was given to be extirpated. The words of the Apostle, "Be ye angry and sin not," at the same time that they imply thus much, that it is possible that anger

may be innocent, imply as evidently that this very rarely happens, and that therefore one needs to be doubly watchful against sin on the approaches of this turbulent and unruly passion. But, though no human appetite or affection was given to be eradicated, all of them were given to be restrained, governed, and directed, by the dictates of conscience, and the commandments of God. Now there is no part of the human frame that requires, as has been said, more circumspect attention than the irascible affections do. "He that is slow "to anger," saith Solomon, "is better "than the mighty; and he that ruleth his "spirit, than he that taketh a city." The obligation which the Christian pastor is under to this attention, from the example and character of the Master whom he serves, I have already examined.

I now enter on the consideration of what is suitable to the end of his ministry. On this I shall be more brief, as all that is here

proper to be attended to may very soon be pointed out. When the birth of our Lord was first announced by the angels to the shepherds, the joyful message was followed by the appearance of a multitude of the heavenly host, who joined in this sacred hymn, expressive of the happy consequences that would flow from that memorable event: "Glory to God in the highest, "and on earth peace, good will towards "men." It was as a reconciler, a peacemaker, that our Lord came into the world: he is therefore fitly denominated "the Prince of Peace." The revelation which he brings from God is termed "the Gospel, or good news of peace." The messengers, whom he employs for publishing it throughout the world, are denominated the preachers, that is, the proclaimers or heralds of peace. It is to announce the terms of the Gospel, that is, the terms of peace with heaven; it is in their Master's name to invite men to accept of those terms, that they are sent:

"We beseech you, in Christ's stead, that "ye be reconciled to God." How unsuitable to such an amiable message is a fiery, unpeaceable, and consequently unlovely temper! How incongruous to the character of a messenger of peace! How much to be dreaded, that the untoward manner of the servant, instead of engaging, should preclude a due attention to the gracious errand on which he comes! If this divine wisdom, which is from above, be gentle, and peaceable, and merciful, it is most befitting that he who has it in charge to announce and recommend it, should be habitually possessed of that meek and quiet spirit, which is not less acceptable to God, than approved of men.

Permit me now to add a few things on the third topic, from which I proposed to enforce this important branch of self-government; namely, from what is adapted to the means which the ministers of religion are authorized to employ, for attaining the

end of their mission. I have had occasion to observe to you, formerly, that the great means to be employed in this cause, is, persuasion: "Knowing the terrors of the "Lord, we persuade men, and we beseech "you in Christ's stead." Any coercion, which man is capable of using, affects only the body; and as the end of civil government is to maintain external peace in the society, by restraining and punishing crimes, the sword of justice is very properly intrusted with the magistrate, and is adequate to the end of his office. But, as it is purely with the soul, the principles, and the affections, that religion has to do; as it aims at restraining outward crimes, by curing radically the criminal disposition; as its great end is the securing of inward peace, peace of conscience, and peace with God; coercive means can have no hold here. Now, if the great means be persuasion, nothing, it must be acknowledged, is more unpersuasive than anger, especially

when excited against those whom it is the duty and the business of the pastor to attempt to gain. Nothing can be more just than that sentiment of Augustine, "Qui docendo nititur persuadere quod bo-"num est, nihil horum trium spernat, ut, "scilicet, doceat, delectet, flectat; ita enim "audietur intelligenter, libenter, obedien-"ter." These three steps in this progress are intimately connected. We should speak so, as, in the first place, to instruct and be understood; in the second, to please, so far at least as to attract and fix attention; in the third, to gain and conquer. Nor can we ever hope to attain the last of these ends, but through the other two.

It may be objected, that on some topics, which it is certainly incumbent on the pastor sometimes to treat, it is difficult to speak in such a manner as to please. I own it is often difficult, but hardly ever impossible; such, for instance, as in the rebuking of sin, which it may be thought

no easy matter to conduct, so as not to prove grating to the sinner. Yet, if the subject of reprehension is the vice, and not the vicious person, the difficulty here is not so great, as, at first sight, one will be apt to imagine. It is the observation of a very ingenious Modern, That though the generality of men be vicious in their practice, the generality esteem virtue in theory; nor can there be a more popular topic, in general, than declaiming against vice, or a more unpopular one than decrying virtue, unless when under the appearance of exalting something which is conceived to be still more divine. When, therefore, the subject (as is the case in preaching) is more properly the sin than the sinner,—though it be every way becoming to shew an honest but temperate indignation against all immorality and irreligion,—still a heartfelt concern for the spiritual and eternal happiness of transgressors, and an anxious desire of reclaiming them, ought to predo-

minate, in the speaker's mind, over every other emotion. In this way, even the conscious offender himself cannot avoid being affected, and in some degree pleased; which are certainly promising advances towards a recovery. Whereas, if the preacher's reproofs had breathed nothing but rage and violence, he had probably disgusted those, who might, by a more gentle method, have been affected by his reprehensions.

There is always in violent anger the appearance of unreasonableness, and a certain impotence of mind, which excludes all impartiality and candour. It is no wonder that such an ungracious aspect should rather repel than attract. Instead of bringing the sinner to yield, it puts him on the defensive; it makes him think more favourably of himself, the more the attack upon him appears the result of prejudice and rage, which, to every thing that opposes them, are always both blind and deaf. No sentiment ever approved itself

more to experience, than that of the Apostle James, "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." And if this holds, when it is sin in the abstract that is reprehended, much more does it hold when the rebuke is actually given to the sinner. Here, indeed, the greatest delicacy is requisite, that whilst you appear to be the enemy of his vices, you may also appear to be the friend of his soul, and to seek his good. It is only thus that you can ever hope he will listen candidly to what you say, or that your reproaches should excite in him any emotion but resentment. We ought, indeed, "to rebuke with all authority," but still in the spirit of meekness. On this article we ought to be so habitually guarded, as not to suffer even the obstinacy of sinners, or the indecent and contemptuous reception which they give to our reproofs, to betray us into any indecency of expression or behaviour; for this is, in effect, degrading our own character,

and affording the offender the best apology that we can supply him with, for vindicating his own behaviour, and accusing us. I acknowledge that I have sometimes heard ministerial rebukes conducted in such a manner, as savoured more of a mean resentment in the speaker, because, forsooth, his own admonitions and authority seemed to be despised, than either of zeal for virtue, or of concern for the salvation of men. Nay, there are those who, sometimes, in the exercise of discipline, will descend so far as to threaten the refractory with calling in the aid of the civil power; not considering how different the province of the magistrate is from that of the pastor, and even in some respects how incompatible. By such means, forced compliances and hypocritical acknowledgments may be extorted, which may prove some sacrifice to priestly pride, as they are humiliating to him who makes them; but, by such means, it were absurd in the pastor to hope to win the

heart of an offender, to cure his spiritual maladies, and to reclaim him. How different is the reproof administered by Christian charity! I do not say, it always heals the patient; that is more than is to be expected; but it bids much fairer for it than the other. As it is ready to make every allowance for the frailty of nature, and the strength of temptation, that candour itself can require, it excites in the other no disposition to resistance. Like a razor smoothed in oil, it pares to the quick the parts affected, entering the deeper, that it does not cause the sore to rankle, as is commonly effected by a coarser instrument.

I shall only add (and thus conclude this Lecture) a few passages from the New Testament to this purpose, which plainly demonstrate that the view which I have been exhibiting of this matter is exactly conformable to the sentiments and precepts of the sacred writers. "Brethren," says Paul, "if a man be overtaken in a fault,

" ye, who are spiritual, restore such an one " in the spirit of meekness; considering " thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Again, to Timothy (who was himself a minister of Jesus): " The servant of the " Lord must not strive, but be gentle to *all* " *men*, not to the good and gentle only," but to all indiscriminately, not excepting the profligate and the froward; " apt to " teach, patient in meekness, instructing " those that oppose themselves, if God per- " adventure will give them repentance to " the acknowledging of the truth." To this I shall only subjoin the admonition which Peter gives, in regard to the manner wherein we ought to defend the truth against the objections of the Infidel: " Be " ready always to give an answer to every " man that asketh you, a reason of the " hope that is in you, with meekness and " reverence."

LECTURE IV.

OF *FORTITUDE*, OR A SUPERIORITY TO EITHER FEAR OR FAVOUR——DANGER TO THE MINISTERS OF OUR CHURCH IN LISTENING TO SOLICITATIONS ON ANY POINT WHICH IS TO BE A MATTER OF JUDICIAL DETERMINATION——STEADINESS IN THE ESSENTIAL PART, THE *MATTER* OF OUR CONDUCT; GENTLENESS, MEEKNESS, AND, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, PLEASANTNESS IN THE *MANNER*.

I HAVE, in a former Discourse, entered on the consideration of those virtues, of which the business of a Christian pastor requires especially the cultivation and exertion. The first I mentioned was meekness, which I understood, in the greatest latitude of signification, as implying a superiority over pride, anger, and impatience; or, as some would choose to express it, the mastery

of the irascible affections. I shall next consider that of *fortitude*, resolution, or strength of mind, which implies a like superiority, when in a good cause, to either fear or favour. Perhaps the occasions for the exertion of this virtue in the pastor, or even its importance, may not be now so manifest as the other. Nothing is more plain, than that it is one of those virtues which was most warmly and frequently inculcated by the Divine Author of our religion, not only on all his followers in general, but on those in particular who were to be employed in instructing others in his doctrine and precepts. On occasion of the very first instructions which he gave to the Twelve, after calling them and distinguishing them by the name *Apostles*, he forewarns them of the bad reception which they would generally meet with, and the dangers to which they would be exposed; subjoining immediately to this warning, "But fear not them "who kill the body, but are not able to

" kill the soul: but rather fear him who " is able to destroy both soul and body " in hell." And to the same purpose he adds, in the same discourse, " He that " findeth his life shall lose it; and he that " loseth his life for my sake, shall find it." To the same great object many of the apostolical injunctions do manifestly point, as when they enjoin us to be " strong in " the Lord, to stand fast in the faith, and " quit us like men." It is to this purpose we are commanded " to take unto us the whole armour of God," the divine panoply, " that we may be able to withstand " in the evil day, and having done all, to " stand." It is this, accordingly, which is the first quality that the Apostle Peter recommends to us as proper to be superadded to faith, Επιχορηγησατε εν τη πιστει ὑμων την αρετην, " Add to your faith *virtue*," as we render it, or *fortitude*, as it always ought to be rendered, when contradistinguished, as in this passage, to other virtues. If the first.

to wit, *faith*, be necessary, as the genuine source of the heavenly treasure, the second, namely *fortitude*, is not less necessary as the guard. Nay, of so great account was this firm and manly spirit with the inspired penmen of the canon, that we find dastards and infidels, δειλοι και απιστοι, ranked in the black catalogue of those who shall be excluded from the New Jerusalem; thus classing under the same condemnation those who, through the influence of their passions, obstinately refuse engaging in the cause of God, and those who through pusillanimity betray it.

Perhaps it will be said, that the peculiar circumstances of the primitive Christians rendered this virtue more necessary to be cultivated, as being of more importance to them, than (considering the change of situation in this respect) it can be said to be to us. It is certain, they had more enemies, and were exposed to much greater dangers than we: the Jews and the Gen-

tiles, amongst whom they lived, and by whom they were for some ages greatly outnumbered, were their declared foes. With them, indeed, all that was valuable in this world was at stake,—their property, their reputation, their liberty, their life, their families; in brief, every thing which the malice and tyranny of men can affect. It will readily be admitted, that the enemies of the true Christian, at present, are neither so numerous, nor so powerful; that, though in some cases both interest and character may suffer, in consequence of his resolute adherence to what he believes to be his duty, the occurrences are comparatively few, in which either life or liberty is endangered. It will in like manner be admitted, that the very foundation of the danger is considerably altered. Formerly, it was the Christian profession, the bare acknowledgment of Christ as our Lord and Master, which was the ground of enmity: it is not so now. However, as it

always has happened, it ever will happen, that a steadfast adherence to the path of duty will cross the private interest of individuals, and obstruct their secular views; and that this will infallibly give rise to hatred and obloquy. The maxim of a spirited French writer holds (I would not say generally, but certainly) sometimes: "The "ill which we do, does not draw on us so "much persecution and hatred as our "good qualities:"—to which that other maxim of the same author serves as a counterpart: "We please oftener, in the "commerce of life, by our faults, than by "our virtues." To the same purpose, though not so general, was the observation of the Dramatist: "Obsequium amicos, veritas odium parit." A man, therefore, who would be conscientious in the cause of truth and virtue, which is the cause of Christ, (and without this his Christian profession is little worth,) has still need of fortitude and intrepidity. Nor is this all;

for even sometimes a concurrence of circumstances will mislead the judgment of the generality of people, in regard to what is right and proper: and, however much deference is due to their opinions in things naturally indifferent, their opinions are not entitled to the smallest regard, when they are in contradiction to truth and rectitude. And that this will sometimes be the case, can hardly admit of question. Seneca's observation holds certainly true in the main: "Non tam bene cum rebus humanis agi-"tur, ut meliora pluribus placeant." Now, though both the foundation be in some respect different, and the effects of that resentment which integrity itself will, in certain circumstances, create, be not so considerable, there is not less occasion for Christian resolution. Perhaps, on the other side, it will appear, that if the evil dreaded be not so great, the danger of incurring it is rather greater. The danger, to which Christians were exposed in the primitive

church, on account of their profession, was in the highest degree alarming. As it was impossible to assume the character, without being exposed to the danger annexed to the profession, nay, and without perceiving that they were constantly exposed, it was of such a nature as was sufficient to rouse the most stupid, and to extort attention from the most remiss: the natural consequence of which might, in some measure, be expected to be, as in effect it was, that their minds would be prepared and fortified for encountering a danger, which, from their first entering on the Christian course, it behoved them to be in the daily expectation of. As they were warned, they were armed: indeed, the weapons of their warfare were not carnal; they were however mighty, through God, for pulling down the strong-holds of the enemy, and enabled them, even in suffering, to vanquish, and to advance the cause of their Master more rapidly than the greatest worldly conqueror

is able to extend his dominions by the sword. Their armour was a faith, which overcometh the world; a hope, that is full of immortality; and a love, not to be surmounted by any earthly consideration. The dangers to which Christians are now exposed are far from being so formidable in appearance; the consequence is, we are much more apt to be secure and unguarded. The common enemy then attempted to take the city of God (if I may be indulged a little in the figurative style) by storm, and now he attempts to take it by mine: the hostile disposition still remains; the war between truth and falsehood, righteousness and unrighteousness, is still carried on; the plan of operations only is changed. What was then openly and violently attacked, is now endangered by sap and ambush: and, I suppose, it will be readily admitted, that it is more difficult to be properly guarded against this danger, than against the other.

A second circumstance, which deserves also to be attended to, is, that with them the contest was about the whole. The aim of the Heathen and the Infidel was, to bring the disciples openly to disown Jesus Christ, explicitly to renounce all allegiance to him as their Lord and King, and to relapse into the idolatries and superstitions from which they had been recovered: in short, nothing less than a total apostasy would satisfy their persecutors. The contest with us appears, upon comparison, to be only about the smaller parts. From the fear of man, which bringeth a snare, or from some sordid views of interest by their favour, we are only solicited, as it were, in a particular instance (which we are but too prone to judge is comparatively a little matter), to forsake the straight path of duty, and violate the dictates of a good conscience. Now this demand, as it appears more moderate, is not apt to strike us with so much horror; and, by conse-

quence, is more likely to obtain our compliance. We do not, at the same time, consider, that every sinful compliance, knowingly and deliberately made, is as real, though not so glaring, or perhaps so atrocious, a denial of our Master, as the other. Are we not taught by the unerring rule of right, that there are "who profess "that they know God, whilst in works "they deny him." It is therefore possible to disclaim him in this way, as well as in the other. And do not such expose themselves to the reproach from him, whom they falsely style their Master: "Why call "ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the "things which I say?" Why do ye flatter me with an empty title, to which your conduct gives the lie? "Not every one "that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter "into the kingdom of heaven." Yet it is most certain, that as the evil diminishes in our conceptions, we are the less fortified against it; and the commission of

one trespass does but too commonly embolden the transgressor to repeat it, nay, perhaps to go still greater lengths. Many a man has been drawn in to squander all his fortune, by parcels, on wretches to whom no inducement could have persuaded him to give up the whole at once. And we may say of them, in the words of the Poet,

> "Piecemeal they win this acre first, then that,
> "Glean on, and gather up the whole estate."

Thus, when the evil comes gradually, as it is not so apt to startle us, we are much more apt to be seduced. Insinuation, though it operates more slowly, will compass its end, in cases where violence would have proved ineffectual.

A third thing, which makes an eminent difference in the dangers to which the primitive Christians were exposed, and by which their faith and obedience were tried, is, that their hazards proceeded almost only from the avowed enemies of the

Christian name—Jews and Pagans; our's, on the contrary, arise solely from those who assume the name of Christian as well as ourselves. Those from whom *they* had to dread danger were so distinguishable, that it was impossible to mistake them. We may here justly apply the Latin proverb: they might say of an enemy, "*Fœnum habet in cornu;*" 'We are sufficiently advertised to beware of him;' whereas, with regard to *us*, those, by whom the faith and virtue of Christians are endangered, are mingled amongst ourselves; they do not carry a badge of distinction about with them, and may, by consequence, have too great influence upon us before we are apprized. But the dangers, to which we are now exposed, do, I acknowledge, affect the whole Christian community, and arise from real differences in the state of the Church. It is most certain, however, that whatever affects the whole society, as Christian, will in a principal manner affect the pastors;

who, as they stand foremost in this spiritual warfare, are the most exposed to every hazard. Indeed we have reason to believe, from the predictions of the New Testament, that, in all ages, the faith, the patience, and the constancy of the disciples of Jesus must submit to a probation of one kind or other, differing at different times, as suits the ends of Infinite Wisdom. We know that, in some shape or other, "Every "one that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall "suffer persecution." There is no possibility, in the present corrupted state of things, to maintain integrity and a good conscience inviolate, without incurring the danger of suffering in one way or other, either in respect of worldly circumstances and advantages, or in respect of reputation, favour, and countenance. Nor does he deserve the Christian name, as our Lord himself has taught us, who does not postpone every consideration to the obedience of his Master, which is indeed always

co-incident with the rules of immutable equity, and the will of God.

There is, in this case, the greater need of firmness and fortitude, that even what are sometimes accounted good qualities in a man will betray him into transgression, when these are not under the constant government of an enlightened conscience. Thus there are few qualities that more engage good liking, than an obliging pliancy of temper; that from which, in the New Testament, a man is characterized "easy to be entreated;" that which our venerable Master himself enjoins in every thing lawful, as where he says, "Give to him "that asketh thee; from him that would "borrow of thee, turn not thou away; and "whosoever shall compel thee to go a "mile, go with him twain." Yet this very disposition, which we are here commanded to cultivate, and which is certainly a most engaging and amiable disposition, is very apt, unless when accompanied with

great prudence and circumspection, to betray a man into the commission of faults, which he would never have been tempted to commit, either through the influence of fear, or through the instigations of avarice. There is something particularly bewitching, to some minds, in the endearment which obliging compliances give rise to, that will go a greater length in persuading *them*, than what with others would prove much more cogent motives. Now, though a man of established integrity would instantly be shocked with the proposal of an action that was evidently flagitious and unjust, and could be in no danger of yielding in so clear a case, we must always take into consideration, that the natural boundaries between the right and the wrong in conduct, or, more properly, between the unlawful and the innocent, we cannot always settle with precision. Our only security, in such cases, is, to keep on the safe side; for we are sure, on the one hand, that certain things

are within the precincts of innocence; in like manner we are sure, on the other hand, that certain things are within the precincts of vice. It is only about the confines that there can be any doubt; for the termination here is not fixed, as it were, by a distinct line; it is more like that which separates light and darkness, and is called twilight, wherein the opposites are blended, the light being insensibly diminished by the deepening gradations of the shade. Now, in regard to what may appear at first dubious, a tractable temper, accustomed to bend to the humours and inclinations of others, has a propensity to gratify them, which, in the circumstances supposed, may prove dangerous to its own peace and virtue. The tendency which men have very generally, if not universally, to believe what they wish, will mislead a man to think more favourably of the case than he would otherwise have done; and one presumption paves the way for an-

other. Venture for once, or twice, or perhaps thrice, on what you have reason to doubt is a criminal part, and it is a hundred to one you will not stop there, but, with as much ease at least, risk afterwards the doing what you know to be such.

It deserves our attention, that true fortitude does not consist merely in a superiority to fear, and in braving bodily danger; but, when considered as a virtue, it implies that strength of mind which qualifies us alike for resisting both our fears and our desires, whenever they would incline us to deviate from the line of duty; in brief, which admits no gratification whatever at the expense of probity. Now it is a most certain fact, that it costs some persons a much stronger exertion to resist the inclination they have to gratify and oblige, than it would cost them to depise any menaces that could be used to influence them: in such persons, it is the part of true fortitude and necessary self-govern-

ment to be able to refuse with steadiness and resolution, when to comply is in any degree repugnant to the calls of duty, or, which is in effect the same, though not so obviously, when contrary to the dictates of Christian prudence. Let it be observed, that here our danger is in some respect the greater, that it is not solely by bad people that we are liable to be misled; it is often by such as really mean us no harm, but may happen to think differently from us on those matters, perhaps misled by personal interest, or by early prejudices. It may be, they are people to whom we have ourselves been indebted, and whom we would gladly have it in our power to oblige; it may be too, that we are afraid of the suspicion or censure of ingratitude, if we do not comply. All these have naturally some influence, and, on the best dispositions, commonly the greatest. Yet still, where there is ground to think that they would lead to an infringement of the

inflexible rule of rectitude, true magnanimity requires that they be resisted.

I shall, for the sake of illustration, instance one kind only of seduction, to which the pastors in this country are sometimes exposed. From the constitution of our National Church, the ministers of religion are endowed with certain powers, as judges in the Ecclesiastical Courts. This often exposes them to solicitations from persons who do not by any means intend to insult them, (though a solicitation on any point, which is to be a matter of judicial determination, is really an insult); but having some interest on one side, and neither the delicacy nor the discernment to perceive an impropriety in such applications, they often, with as little ceremony as decency, urge their suit. I do own to you, that I believe there is nothing which, in this country, has tended more to lessen the ministerial character, than too great a readiness in many to give way to addresses of

this kind. No pretence of former obligations can excuse it. The debts of gratitude are never to be paid at the expense of justice: I might as reasonably rob my neighbour, to discharge my creditor: for wherever there are parties concerned in the decision, the case is perfectly similar. And even where there are not, where the matter is not so properly a matter of judgment as a matter of counsel and deliberation, there is still a right and a wrong, a true and a false, in things which ought ever to influence us beyond all personal considerations:—*Carus amicus, sed veritas carior.* Indeed, if the pastor maintains a proper dignity of behaviour, as well as integrity, he will, I must acknowledge, be rarely exposed to any trial of this kind. If you would uniformly maintain this dignity, be cautious, even though your opinion of the matter should fall in entirely with what is solicited by your friend, of giving him so much as the shadow of a ground to

imagine that his application had any influence on your judgment. If you are weak enough, or wicked enough, to assume a merit with him from your conduct, you expose yourself ever after to the like indignities; for they ought to be regarded as such in their consequences, however they were meant.

Are we, then, roughly and bluntly to reject every suit of this kind, from what quarter soever it shall come? We ought doubtless to reject it; but I know no advantage that accrues to any cause from roughness of manner. There is a manly firmness that it is extremely proper to maintain on such occasions; but this has no affinity to passion and asperity. The latter always betray weakness, rather than strength of mind; and rarely fail of making that conduct appear merely the result of humour, which ought to appear the sole effect of settled and well-weighed principles of action. If the servant of the Lord must be patient

and gentle to all men, there can be no good apology offered for adding to the refusal any thing that savours of rudeness. Indeed there is something in the manner of doing things, to which more is often to be attributed, than to the things done. It requires but little practice of the world to observe, that one man shall refuse a favour more obligingly than another grants it. The former refuses in such a manner as convinces you that he would have liked much better to gratify you, were it a thing proper to be done: another grants your suit, but with so much haughtiness, with such an air of superiority, as seems to upbraid you with the weight of the obligation he is laying you under. The former gains your esteem at least, if not your love, in spite of his refusal; the latter hurts your sensibility, and loses you, in spite of his compliance. But I am sensible there is something too delicate in this affair to be either explained or enforced by mere verbal

instruction. Knowledge of life and character, attention to the real consequences of things, and self-command, are absolutely necessary.

Do not imagine, that by the recommendation I have given, of joining a certain pleasantness of manner to manly firmness of conduct, that I mean to recommend that mere external polish, so much valued by 'men of the world,' as they are called, and in which there is commonly so much disingenuousness and dissimulation. What is called 'good manners', when taken by itself, is a mere exterior, and may not unfitly be defined, in Shakspeare's phrase, "the simular of virtue." The courtesy of a well-bred man has, in those little matters and formalities about which it is employed, a certain semblance of the benevolence, the meekness, the gentleness, the modesty, the humility, and even the self-denial of the Christian,— "every one in honour preferring another," as the Apostle expresses it. But here lies

the difference, that the bare exterior, the mere semblance, is considered as all that is necessary for the character of the man of fashion: and this is of so great account with him, that the substance is often sacrificed to the shadow; as holds in the case of flattery, when a man would please another at the expense of truth and sincerity. It is very much otherwise with the Christian, who considers mere externals as of little or no significance, without those internal and essential principles, from which the other ought naturally to proceed. Good-breeding, as the word is commonly understood, is a mere varnish: it is not a superficial quality, such as this, which I would recommend to the Christian pastor. I am far from being unfriendly to good-breeding: it is certainly ornamental to the character; nay more, it is useful, when regulated by a strict regard to truth. But then I would have, in the minister of religion, the politeness of the gentleman grafted on the

virtue of the Christian. Without the latter, the former is but a painted bubble, a thing of no intrinsic value: without the former, the latter, though still highly valuable, loses much of its beauty, and even of its influence. Take them therefore separately, and I acknowledge, that, beyond all comparison, virtue adds greater value to the character; yet even that value is considerably enhanced by the union. I should, no doubt, prefer an unpolished diamond to a pebble ever so highly polished; yet even the diamond itself, when cut and polished, is of greater value, as well as beauty, than it was before. Our Lord himself did not disdain sometimes to give admonitions that seem to refer more immediately to the article of good-breeding. I shall not therefore hesitate to conclude this Discourse, by adding to the more important duties of Christianity an admonition which Peter did not think unsuitable to the dignity of the Apostolate,—

"Be courteous;"—ever endeavour to unite manly resolution and steadiness, in what regards the essential part, the matter of your conduct, with gentleness, meekness, and, as much as possible, pleasantness, in what regards the manner; or, as a late Writer expresses it, "*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*"

LECTURE V.

OF *TEMPERANCE*.——A LOOSE AND DISSOLUTE MANNER IN CONVERSATION MAY SHEW A MORE VITIATED DISPOSITION, AND DO MORE HURT IN SOCIETY, THAN EVEN SOME TRESPASSES AGAINST THE STRICT RULES OF TEMPERANCE.

AMONG the virtues, of which the office of a minister of religion in a particular manner requires the exertion, I have mentioned, and considered at some length, *meekness*, or a superiority over anger, pride, and impatience; *fortitude*, or that strength of mind, which, in all matters wherein duty is concerned, makes a man superior both to fear and to favour. I shall now consider the duty of *temperance*, implying the mastery of concupiscible affections; under

which I also include what may properly be called Christian *self-denial.* There is no virtue which has been held in higher estimation by the generality of people, or been considered as more essential to the character of a pastor, than a proper self-government in this respect, or a due command over the inferior and bodily appetites: yet there is no virtue, in the Christian life, which hath been more generally misunderstood, or which superstition and fanaticism have dressed out in a more fantastic garb. It is acknowledged, on all hands, that it would ill befit the teacher of a doctrine so pure and heavenly to be the slave of appetite. To be voluptuous, and to be heavenly-minded, can scarcely, to any understanding, appear compatible. But what must we do, in order to subdue appetite? Must we extirpate it altogether? No: it is impossible. And though it were possible, it would not be virtuous. In taming a monster or wild

beast, and rendering him not only harmless, but useful, greater ability is requisite; and therefore more glory is attained, than would be acquired in killing him. The corporeal appetites were given for necessary and important purposes,—for the preservation and continuation of the human race. How absurd to suppose we can recommend ourselves to the beneficent Creator, by counteracting his purpose, so clearly manifested in our frame! Still, however, it was intended that these appetites should be in subordination to the mind. So much care, we may well conclude, has not been taken by Providence, both of the individual and of the species, merely that they may exist. Existence itself is given to man for a further and a nobler end. The light of Nature more obscurely, the light of Revelation more clearly, point to this great end, the perfecting of his nature, by his pursuing a conformity to the will of God, and thereby rising to the highest felicity of which he is

susceptible. Wherever, therefore, the indulgence of appetite contravenes this ultimate design of our being, it must be unlawful, and ought to be restrained. The well-instructed Christian distinguishes between the means and the end; and even of ends, when they interfere, he distinguishes those of a higher from those of a lower order. The sensualist, on the contrary, converts the means into the end, and the end into the means: what is the lowest in the order of nature, is, in his account, the highest. The former eats, that he may live; the latter lives, that he may eat. But, to be more particular, it is proper to inquire, what the restraints are, which the Christian religion lays on the appetites of its votaries.

The first restraint which we are here laid under, is, when the gratification of our own appetite proves in any way prejudicial to another. It is a conscientious regard to this check, that constitutes the virtue of

chastity; a trespass against which always implies injury to our neighbour, and a violation of laws essential to the good order, and therefore to the welfare, of society. The same consideration may also occasionally take place, in controling other appetites. Hence the duty of denying ourselves in what is not necessary to us, and may prove matter of offence to the weak.

The second restraint, which Christianity lays us under, is moderation in the indulgence, even though the rights of others should be no wise affected. This implies, not only that we guard against excess, but that we be free from every thing that savours of epicurism in those inferior gratifications. This appears, not only from the strict injunctions of our Lord, against all anxiety in regard to what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, as well as in regard to what we shall wear, but also from the express charge he gave his Disciples, to eat

such things, wherever they came, as were set before them. It would as ill befit the Christian temperance to ask questions, like the voluptuary, for the sake of appetite, as it would the liberal spirit which the Gospel breathes, to ask questions, like the Judaizing Christians in the Apostolic age, for the sake of conscience. Hence arise the virtues of continence and sobriety, —and, from the want of this check, the opposite vices, lasciviousness, effeminacy, drunkenness, gluttony, sloth; for the desire of rest, till our exhausted powers shall be recruited, is a corporeal appetite, as necessary for our preservation as either hunger or thirst, but, like all other appetites, is liable to abuse, and, when indulged to excess, degenerates into vice. There is a certain degree, beyond which if we proceed, the end of Nature is not only unanswered, but the very reverse is promoted. Food is absolutely necessary for preserving health and prolonging life; but debauchery

of every kind tends directly to ruin health, and shorten life. Rest at proper intervals is necessary, but laziness and inactivity are pernicious. And how are they pernicious? They debilitate all the powers, both of body and mind. Nor is this all: excessive indulgence produces an habitual indolence and lassitude; in consequence of which, men are, in a great measure, indisposed for the discharge of the most momentous duties.

It may not be improper here to observe, that as the Christian pastors are intended for being in all things ensamples to the flock, it is not enough that in this respect they avoid scandal,—they ought to be exemplary. Neither can we always judge infallibly, by the degree in which any particular action or habit is scandalous, of the degree in which it is vicious. I acknowledge, indeed, that the scandal itself makes an additional aggravation in a character which is peculiarly liable to be hurt by it:

but hardly will any person of reflection hesitate to say, that one may be a greater sensualist, who was never seen drunk, than another who has sometimes been detected in that disgraceful situation. The latter, though not given to appetite, and no drunkard, may have been betrayed into such circumstances in an unguarded hour, by qualities in themselves not bad, nay, if under proper government, even commendable; but there can be no decent apology for either the glutton or the epicure. Yet the former vice, I acknowledge, gives greater scandal in the ministerial character; and that merely because its bad consequences are more immediate, and less equivocal. Something similar may be observed in regard to some other sensual indulgences. The name 'whoremonger,' like 'glutton' and 'drunkard,' to every person of discernment, conveys the idea of something despicable, as well as vicious. Yet a man who, though no rake, may have been

chargeable with some trespass against the laws of chastity, is not, in the eye of impartial reason, half so odious, or so vitiated in disposition, as another, who, though perhaps not accused of the like transgressions in practice, indulges himself in a loose and dissolute manner in conversation, which far more effectually taints the imaginations of the hearers, and corrupts their hearts, than the influence of the bad example of the other is able to effect. I must acknowledge too, that, in my opinion, an habitual tendency to discourse of this sort betrays a pruriency of appetite, and a polluted fancy, which savour more of a rooted voluptuousness, than could justly be concluded from several slips in conduct.

It has been observed, that where there is in the constitution a proneness to sensual indulgences, that has not been subdued by just and enlarged sentiments of religion and virtue, if it be restrained on one side

by considerations merely prudential, it will naturally break forth on another. And this has given rise to a second observation, closely connected with the former, that those people, who, from their profession, or something particular in their station and circumstances, are obliged to a stricter observance of decorum than others, in regard to certain actions, often take greater liberties in respect of such other actions as do not equally expose them to the censure of the multitude. Though they will take care to avoid drunkenness, they have no scruple in pampering themselves; and if they cannot be accused of whoredom, they appear resolved to compensate for this loss (for so they seem to account it) by feeding their imaginations with licentious talk. I acknowledge, candidly, that I think there is some foundation for these remarks; and though the examples of this kind in the ministerial office are (God be blessed!) far

from being numerous, yet, on the other hand, we cannot say with truth that it is impossible to find such instances. I once knew such a one myself, a singularity indeed, whose whole conversation was composed alternately of fanaticism and obscenity, and sometimes of a jumble of both in the same sentence:—I say fanaticism; for we may be certain that one of this character has no idea of rational religion, or of the genuine spirit of the Gospel, which could never, like the cant of a faction, commonly very pliant where practical religion only is concerned, be rendered capable of a coalition so unnatural. Such a one, in my judgment, I will tell you plainly, deserves deprivation no less than an open debauchee. And I am strongly inclined to think, that one of this cast does full as much hurt by his conversation, as the other by his practice. The taint is, after a little time, but too easily taken, even by those who at first viewed it with disgust:—

" Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
" As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
" But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
" We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

It is incumbent on every Christian pastor, who would faithfully discharge the trust committed to him, to endeavour, as far as his example will extend, to wipe out every stain that may have been thrown upon the character. Surely pampering, and luxury of any kind, ill befits the man who has it in charge to enjoin others to be temperate in all things; and his conversation would need to be peculiarly chaste and pure, who would persuade the Christian people to purity, in thought and word, as well as in deed, and particularly to put all filthy communication out of their mouth. Double meanings, and indecent jokes, are especially to be avoided: and were I to tell you freely my opinion in a matter that perhaps to others will appear either trivial or innocent, I would, as far as my influence could go, banish entirely

that bane of decency and good manners, called 'Sentimental toasts.' I do not deny that they may be, and sometimes are, managed in such a manner, as to be very harmless; but it is very plain, that by means of the enigmatical style allowed in these, they supply the lewd and dissolute (when there happen to be such in the company) with a kind of vehicle for conveying their nasty prurient conceptions. And things of this kind, which might have been easily prevented, by not affording them such pretexts, it is not always possible afterwards properly to redress. So much for the two first checks, which require that we always avoid any indulgence to ourselves which may prove injurious to another, and that we carefully avoid excess in these indulgences, which never fails, in one way or other, to prove injurious to ourselves, either in body, in mind, or in both.

It must be owned, however, that the utmost we can be said to attain, even by

a regular and habitual submission to these restraints, is, barely not to be vicious. The man who is only thus far temperate, is entitled to no more than the negative praise of being on this article blameless. Would we attain that command over the body which the spirit of our religion implies, and which is truly praise-worthy and virtuous, more is necessary. Our blessed Lord, who in all things ought to be regarded as our great Standard and Exemplar, though he twice fed the multitude miraculously, could not be induced to work a miracle, on a very pressing occasion, to satisfy his own hunger. Why this difference? The first, namely, the feeding of the multitude by miracle in the desert, was an act of humanity; the second, to wit, the miraculous conversion of stones in the wilderness into bread, to supply the cravings of his hunger, to which he was advised by the Tempter, might have been construed, had he complied, into a want of superiority over his

appetites. The one was intended as an evidence of his mission,—for this way all his miracles pointed; the other would have betrayed a distrust in Providence. It became him, therefore, our great Pattern in faith and patience, as well as in self-command, to avoid even the appearance of distrusting the care of Heaven; or of impatience under suffering, by recurring to means to which he knew that others, his followers in after ages, who would be called to imitate him, could not recur. It ought therefore to be admitted as a third restraint on self-indulgence, included under the name of Christian temperance, when such indulgence of one's-self may prove the occasion of some ill consequences, or the prevention of some good.

In the variety of incidents, to which human life in every station is exposed, it often happens, that even the most innocent gratifications may interfere with favourable opportunities of doing good, which, if lost,

are never afterwards to be recovered. These, doubtless, ought never to be let pass unimproved, when they occur. What admirable lessons, in this way, does the example of our Lord present us with! His conduct bore witness more strongly than his words, that "it was as his meat," and more than his meat, "to do the will "of Him who sent him, and to finish his "work." When did he, for the sake of any ease, refreshment, or convenience to himself, let slip an occasion of conferring benefits on others? When did ever hunger, or thirst, or cold, or fatigue, set bounds to the exercise of his piety, his humanity, his beneficence? He went about continually doing good, instructing the ignorant, reclaiming the profligate, exposing the absurd pretensions of superstition, vindicating the character of genuine religion, pulling off the mask from hypocrisy, and relieving distress. His uncommon assiduity in these exercises appears, not only from the whole

tenour of his history, but also from the unfavourable construction which some of his relations seemed disposed to put on his extraordinary ardour and application. As another eminent example of the like noble victory over the inferior appetites, I might also quote his zealous follower, and servant, Paul. Such, I conceive, is the true law of Christian temperance,—a law in every respect rational and manly. It gives no permission to an indulgence which is prejudicial to another, hurtful to ourselves, and which may prove, though indirectly, the source of bad consequences to any, or deprive us of an opportunity, not afterwards to be recalled, of doing good. Other limits it knows none. But I am aware, that, whilst some will be of opinion that the restrictions I have mentioned are both too numerous and too rigid, others, on the contrary, will think that they are far from being either numerous or rigid enough. Truth is most

commonly to be found in the middle between the two extremes.[1]

---

(1) For the Author's sentiments on the extreme of too numerous and too rigid restrictions on this article, see the Essay on Christian Temperance and Self-Denial, subjoined to his Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, lately published.

LECTURE VI.

VICES, OR EVILS, TO WHICH THE OCCUPATION OF A MINISTER EXPOSES HIM——MR. HUME'S ACCOUNT OF THE SPIRIT OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE; A *CARICATURA*, BUT MAY SUGGEST SOME PROFITABLE INSTRUCTION TO PASTORS——TEMPTATION TO HYPOCRISY TO BE OVERCOME, BY *BEING* WHAT THE HYPOCRITE WANTS ONLY TO BE THOUGHT——A BAD MAN WILL FIND NO COMFORT IN THE BUSINESS OF A PASTOR.

WHEN I entered on the subject of the character to be supported, and the conduct to be pursued, by the minister of religion, I proposed to digest what I had to offer, in the following method. I was to consider, first, what those vices are, which, in a more especial manner, tend to obstruct the minister's success, by exposing him to universal contempt; secondly, what those

virtues are, of which the business of a Christian pastor requires especially the cultivation and exertion; thirdly, what those evils are, to which his very occupation itself may be said in some respect to expose him. The first and second of these I have discussed with all the brevity which the importance of the subject would admit. On the first I observed, that the things, which, in a more especial manner, brought scandal and reproach on the ministerial character, were the following; a flagrant violation of the known laws of sobriety and chastity; impiety, or an open want of reverence of God, and respect to his worship and ordinances; an unguarded levity and folly in conversation, dress, or behaviour; and such a contempt of the sentiments of the people, as leads one wantonly to shock their prejudices in things indifferent. On the second I observed, that, however certain it is that the business of a Christian pastor powerfully excites to the cultivation of every virtue,

yet, as it was not my intention, in these Lectures, to give a complete system of Christian ethics, it would not be necessary here to enter on the consideration of those internal dispositions and graces that are fundamental to all religion. I proposed, therefore, only to consider certain qualities of temper and disposition, that more particularly regard our external behaviour, and our manner of treating those persons with whom we are concerned,—a matter of the greatest consequence to our success. These I have considered under the following articles; *meekness*, or a superiority over the irascible affections—anger, pride, and impatience; *fortitude*, or that firmness of mind in the discharge of duty, which makes a man superior alike to the fear of danger and to the desire of favour; *temperance*, or a superiority over the concupiscible affections, that is, over bodily appetite and the desire of wealth.

I am now come to the third and last

thing proposed, which is, to consider what those vices or evils are, to which the very occupation of a minister of religion may be said in some respect to expose him. There is no profession or occupation in life, but as it has its own advantages, it has also its disadvantages: as, in some instances, it may give peculiar helps and motives to some virtues, so it may, in other instances, expose to peculiar temptations to some vices. That any business or occupation affords some particular temptations to evil, is no reflection on that business, much less an argument of its unlawfulness or inutility. Magistracy, with the power wherewith it is accompanied, gives, on some occasions, but too strong a temptation to oppression, and to the wresting of public justice, for the sake of gratifying private favour or private malice: yet magistracy is not only useful, but necessary for maintaining peace and order in society. The different ranks in the community are

in a manner essential, not only to the welfare, but to the subsistence, of the body politic: yet the superiority in power and property, which is commonly attendant on the upper ranks, frequently betrays the possessor into insolence and violence; and the dependence and indigence in the lower ranks is, as often, the source of the basest artifices, of lying, and of theft. This present state of things, in whatever shape we propose to live in it, is, and will be, a state of probation; and by no art, no choice, can we avoid a share in this probation. By one particular election, in respect of business, we may escape the temptations that are common in another; but then, it is a thousand to one, we expose ourselves to some, from which we should have been exempted in the other. There is only then, at most, a choice left us in regard to the temptations, whether we shall encounter those of one kind, or those of another. And, in every situation, it is incum-

bent on all, and will be the study of those who desire to acquit themselves honourably in the part assigned them, to study to improve the advantages which their situation gives them, and to be doubly guarded against the temptations which it brings. I own, however, that though all are exposed to some, there is not a perfect equality, in this respect, in the different professions or businesses. Perhaps it will appear, on inquiry, that the occupation of a minister of religion exposes its possessor to as few as any other occupation. Will it be pretended, that it furnishes us with any additional motives or temptations to intemperance, to drunkenness, or to breaches of the law of chastity? No, surely. Does it prompt to levity and folly in our conversation and behaviour? Nor that neither. Does it excite us to a supercilious neglect of the sentiments and opinions of others, to arrogance in our behaviour towards them, and an indifference as to their judg-

ment of us? It will not be suspected of this effect. Does it stimulate to an impious behaviour, such as may breed an irreverence towards God, and neglect of religion?—Quite the reverse. In all these it will be acquitted, not only by every unbiassed judge, but even by every impartial enemy. If any, in the station of Christian pastors, are to be found stained with any of these vices, it will be allowed, on all hands, that so far from being prompted to such a criminal conduct by the nature and spirit of their station, they, on the contrary, act in open defiance of that spirit, and in violation of the most manifest and sacred obligations which the ministerial character lays them under. Such, therefore, in the place and office of Christian pastors, ought to be considered rather as monsters, than as the natural productions of the soil.

But, it will be said, the danger lies in the opposite extreme. The temptation

is so strong to secure the character of pious, and serious, and temperate, and attentive to the spiritual concerns of the people, that it may prove a strong inducement to affect this character where it is not, or at least to a degree beyond what it really is; and thus it presents those of this function with strong temptations to the detestable sin of hypocrisy. In this manner does one ingenious Writer, not very friendly to the office and character, argue on this subject. "Though all mankind have a strong "propensity to religion, at certain times, "and in certain dispositions, yet there "are few, or none, who have it to that "degree, and with that constancy, which "is requisite to support the character of "this profession. It must therefore hap- "pen, that clergymen, being drawn from "the common mass of mankind, as people "are to other employments, by the views "of profit, the greatest part, though not "Atheists or Freethinkers, will find it

" necessary, on particular occasions, to feign
" more devotion than they are at that
" time possessed of, and to maintain the
" appearance of fervour and seriousness,
" even when jaded with the exercises of
" their religion, or when they have their
" minds engaged in the common occupa-
" tions of life. They must not, like the
" rest of the world, give scope to their
" natural movements and sentiments; they
" must set a guard over their looks, and
" words, and actions; and, in order to sup-
" port the veneration paid them by the
" ignorant vulgar, they must not only
" keep a remarkable reserve, but must
" promote the spirit of superstition by a
" continued grimace and hypocrisy. This
" dissimulation often destroys the can-
" dour and integrity of their tempers,
" and makes an irreparable breach in their
" characters."—This is one part of the charge against our profession, drawn in very strong colours, and is really what

Italian painters call a *Caricatura*. It has some foundation in truth, but every feature is exaggerated, and the colours are overcharged. An artist in this way will, however, have the address to make a very ugly picture bear a striking resemblance to a very beautiful face. It is a judicious advice that was given by a late worthy Divine, that, in order to arrive at self-knowledge and self-correction, we ought to consider, impartially, what part of our character an enemy would most readily lay hold of, in order to traduce us; for, though the representations of malice or resentment might be very unjust, there is a presumption, that one so disposed would lay hold of what is really most exceptionable, and gives the fairest handle for obloquy. The same observation may very properly be extended to professional characters; for even whole classes or professions of men will, no doubt, have their enemies as well as individuals; and few classes have more

or keener enemies than the ministers of religion. It is not my business, in these Lectures, to vindicate the ministerial character in general from the aspersions that have been thrown upon it. This, by the way, is the more unnecessary, that the reflections thrown out by the Writer lately quoted, have, in that light, been considered already, to very good purpose, by another[1]. The only use that I intend to make here of these and the like reproaches is, to consider how we may derive some profitable instruction and advantage to ourselves from the attempts that may be made to lessen us in the esteem of the world. We are sure of one thing, that no general reflections of this kind can be of any material disservice to us, if those, who read

(1) The Author here refers to a Sermon by his learned colleague, Dr. Gerard, entitled "The Influence of the Pastoral Office on the Character," preached before the Synod of Aberdeen in 1760, and published at the time; and afterwards reprinted in a Collection of Sermons by the same Author, in two volumes.

them, cannot find that they are supported by what they themselves have actually experienced of the order so characterized. Without this, those fine-spun and abstract reasonings from the tendency of the office will go for nothing. But, to be impartial, is there not some foundation for the charge? Is not reputation here of so great consequence, that it may tempt a bad man in this office to screen himself under a disguise, and play the hypocrite? And may it not induce a man, who is not really bad or worthless, to affect, on some occasions, more fervour and devotion than he is conscious of at the time? We cannot say with truth, that it may not. But let it be observed, that if there were not in the ministerial character the strongest obligations, and the strongest motives, to be virtuous and pious, there could not be in it any temptation to assume the appearances of virtue and piety, where the reality is wanting. The former ought to be

regarded as the primary tendency of the pastoral function; the latter, but as the secondary, at most. However, as no station, not even the most sacred, will secure to its possessors such invaluable attainments as virtue and religion, it cannot be doubted, that where vice and irreligion are most remarkably disgraceful, there they will most carefully be cloaked. Hence the temptation to hypocrisy, which, considering the source whence it arises, namely, the necessity of what appears holy and just, more truly reflects honour on the profession, than disgrace. It is because virtue there seems indispensable, that such a phantom, or semblance of it, is adopted, where it happens to be wanting, to supply its place.

But, in order to prevent all occasion or danger of this evil in the ministers of religion, I would advise them only to comply with the first motion naturally suggested by the profession. Be good and pious, and

then to appear good and pious will follow of course; the way will be smooth and easy; you will have only to pursue the track to which pious and virtuous dispositions naturally lead: whereas, if you satisfy yourself with the appearance, you enter upon a most difficult task; your thoughts and your words, your inclinations and your actions, will ever be at variance,—a way of life which, even to the most profligate dispositions, must be unpleasant: it is, in fact, to be under perpetual constraint, and never to taste genuine liberty, either of speech or of behaviour. But this is not only the most unpleasant choice, but the most unprofitable, both for the present life and for the future. As to its unprofitableness for a future life, it is too obvious, to those who believe in a future life, to need an illustration; but even as to the present, to support with uniformity, for a tract of time, a feigned character, is not so easy a task as some may fondly

imagine: I may safely pronounce it impossible, so as to escape discovery from the more judicious; and it very rarely escapes being suspected, even by those of an inferior class. What the Wise Man has said of lying, is justly applicable to dissimulation of every kind: "The lip of truth "shall be established for ever; but the "lying tongue is but for a moment." Deceit and falsehood can only serve a present turn, it will sooner or later infallibly be detected; whereas truth stands the test of time, and gathers strength by its duration.

But does not religion require of all its votaries a constant watchfulness and guard over themselves, that they may not be seduced into vice, which is the path of the destroyer? It is true, indeed, we are to keep a watch over the door of our lips, that we err not with our tongue: in regard to our thoughts and actions, we are in like manner required to be attentive and circumspect. But the case here is totally different. A

good man exercises this vigilance over himself of choice: he hates vice, and, by consequence, he is anxious that he may not be drawn into its snares; he loves virtue, and therefore desires, above all things, to be confirmed in the possession and practice of it. It is not so with the hypocrite and dissembler: he also is watchful over himself; but, then, it is not that he may be what he approves and admires, what of all things he would choose to be, and would consider as the most valuable attainment;—far from it: it is, solely, that he may not betray what he is; that he may escape discovery. This is not a natural object, even to the wicked: on the contrary, it is one of the greatest violences done to Nature. To be always playing a part, to be the stage-actor (for such is the emphatic import of the word hypocrite) through the whole of life, in every company, and on every occasion, continually to speak a language foreign to the heart, and to be in continual

dread of detection, is one of the most ineligible situations that it is possible for us to figure to ourselves. That it is neither natural nor easy, even to bad characters, is manifest from this, that when all accidental motives, from profession, fear, and interest, are removed, they choose much rather to throw off the mask, and impudently to avow their vices. And, indeed, when this is properly considered, there arises, out of this very evil or corruption, a strong motive to the minister of religion to study, above all things, to be what he would seem to be—upright and unblameable. I may therefore justly address myself to pastors, and to all who have this charge in view, in some such terms as the following:—Whatever flattering things may be said, to those of other professions, in favour of a dissolute life, and however indulgent the world are to their vices and follies, the Christian pastor, depend upon it, can entertain no reasonable hope, either of peace in himself,

or respect from men, (not to mention the favour of Heaven,) but in the path of virtue and religion. To such I may well say, What other option can ye make? Would ye impudently pursue the paths of vice, like the profligates of the age? Expect not, if ye do, the same favourable allowances; by all mankind, even by the vicious, ye will infallibly be hated and despised. Will ye hide your inward naughtiness by a false pretence of religion, and exhibit a counterfeit to the world? You will not in that way long escape the just abhorrence of the wise and good. Nothing is so difficult as to maintain, uniformly, a borrowed character. Nature may long, but will not always be suppressed: she will burst forth at an unguarded hour, to your confusion and disappointment. But should ye escape being detected, and therefore being despised by the world, would a man of any consideration choose continually to act a part in which he must unavoidably despise

himself. There is no alternative, that merits a moment's balancing or doubt. The strait way has, no doubt, its difficulties, especially at first entering on it; but these daily lessen; the road becomes sensibly smoother as ye advance; and ye will find it inexpressibly comfortable when once your progress in it is become habitual: it will fully verify your great Master's declaration;—"His commandments" will prove themselves, upon the trial, "not "to be grievous;—his yoke to be easy, and "his burthen light." The very odiousness of that part of the alternative, hypocrisy, depraved as the world is, adds unspeakable weight to all the motives, which this profession presents us with, to virtue and religion.

But if there be any of you, on whom those motives have no influence—(Observe, Gentlemen, I only speak hypothetically, for I am far from thinking so uncharitably of any of my auditors,)—I would say to such,

'Be wise in time, and have nothing to do with a business to which your disposition is so ill adapted.' I will not argue with you on spiritual or moral considerations, which have no weight with those of this character; but I urge you from motives merely secular. You may, indeed, make a living by this profession, but, depend upon it, you will find no comfort in it. A state of continual uninterrupted constraint is the most painful condition imaginable;—your words and thoughts ever at variance; yourselves affecting a warmth and earnestness which ye do not feel; employed in exercises which ye nauseate; inculcating principles which ye disbelieve, or at least have no settled conviction of; enforcing on others a temper and practice for which ye have no relish;—thus hampered on every side, and walking incessantly in trammels. Do but consider, when, in any of the ordinary businesses of life, a person has made a wrong choice, or perhaps his friends have made it for him,

and he is, by a concurrence of circumstances, forced into an employment which he dislikes, how little satisfaction does he find in it? Do not the duties of his station prove, in effect, a perpetual penance to him? Yet the case is infinitely worse here. Though such a one, as I just now supposed, is compelled to do what is disagreeable to him, and what he therefore looks on as drudgery, he is not laid under a necessity of dissembling; and it infers no dishonour (though it may imply a degree of imprudence) to acknowledge that he has been unfortunate in his choice. The case is far otherwise with the pastor who is destitute of the principles of his office, who must appear desirous to persuade others to the love of God and goodness which he never felt, and to kindle in their breasts a zeal for religion and mankind, of which his own is perfectly insensible;—I might rather say, to which he is a secret foe: for wherever religion is concerned, there is no neutrality.

" He that is not for us, is against us; and " he that is not against us, is on our side."

I shall conclude with saying to such (and it needs not one grain of the prophetic spirit to make the discovery), that if ye will persist in making so preposterous a choice, ye will infallibly repent of it, when to change is not so easy, or perhaps is out of your power. Hitherto, Gentlemen, I have gone on the supposition of the very worst, that a bad man, influenced by worldly motives, is induced to engage in so incongruous a business, as is that of teaching others what he hath not yet been taught himself —to love God, and to serve him.

But it may be said, though a pious man and a hypocrite are two characters that are really incompatible, (as much as an honest man, and a villain who finds his account in endeavouring to pass upon the world for honest,) yet as absolute perfection is not the attainment of mortality, may not a dash of the vice of hypocrisy enter into a

character which in the main is good? and may not such a one find it necessary, on particular occasions, to feign more devotion than he is at that time possessed of, and to maintain the appearance of fervour and seriousness, when tired with the exercises of religion? Does not even the propriety of maintaining in the minds of the people a strong veneration for the sacredness of the character, afford some temptation to them to act this part?—That, to a certain degree, it may at times have an undue influence this way, even on a man who, upon the whole, is justly denominated pious and sincere, I will not take upon me to deny: but that such a man should promote what he knows to be the spirit of superstition, by a continued grimace and hypocrisy, (as the author, from whom I took this exception, expresses it,) I know is impossible and contradictory. Light and darkness are not more opposite, than is the spirit of the Gospel (which prompts to the love of God

and love of mankind, to the virtues of meekness, temperance, fortitude, humanity, equity, and rational piety) from the spirit of superstition, which instigates only to a blind tenaciousness of absurdities in theory, and the most contemptible mummeries in practice, as a full compensation for every defect in virtue, and an atonement for every vice.

But I still admit, that a good man and faithful servant of Jesus, who has a genuine zeal for the honour of God, may yet have more anxiety than he ought to have, and more than the purity of the Christian institution admits, about the applause of men: this, however, is undoubtedly a fault; and, if indulged, it may grow to an excess that is not only injurious to the spiritual state of the individual guilty of it, but has also some tendency to promote, among the people, superstitious or enthusiastical notions in regard to religion. That a remarkable frequency, or being too long occupied at

one time, in the public exercises of devotion, will present the minister with some temptation to employ a little artifice in concealing his fatigue, is a matter not to be questioned: but there can be no doubt that every attentive follower of Christ will carefully guard against an evil which his Master has so especially warned him to avoid. If, like the Pharisees, we do all our works that we may be seen of men, and have praise of them, we know that, like the Pharisees, we shall have no reward from our Father, who is in heaven. If we resemble them in the motives by which we are influenced to labour in this service, we shall resemble them, also, in the fruits that our labour will yield us.

But how, it may be asked, is this evil best to be guarded against? This is a question of real importance, and will therefore deserve our serious attention. Let it be remarked then, that though, in regard to the inward temper and disposition which

religion requires, we ought to be at all times possessed of them,—with regard to the outward duties of the Christian life, like every other action that concerns our present state or support, they have all their proper times and seasons; and it is possible here, even in the most important and solemn duties, to be faulty in excess as well as in defect. I acknowledge, at the same time, that the latter fault is incomparably more frequent than the other: but, as the duties of the Christian life are both many and various, the nature of the thing implies, that we are not to be so much occupied in the practice of any one duty as to exclude the opportunities of practising the rest. The similitude employed by the Apostle, in relation to the different spiritual gifts that abounded in the Primitive Church, may with equal propriety be applied to the different duties, public and private, that belong to the Christian life:—"If the whole body were an eye,

" where were the hearing; and if the whole " were hearing, where were the smelling? " And if they were all one member, where " were the body?" It is manifest, therefore, that to any one duty, even the most sacred and the most important, too much time may be allotted at once, or the recurrence may be too frequent; though, in this last respect, the danger is not so great as in the first. For let it be further observed, that by any long-continued and strong exertion the powers both of body and mind are exhausted, and a certain tiresomeness and languor are the inevitable consequences. The mind is, to the full, as susceptible of fatigue as the body; and it also happens, sometimes, that when " the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak." Would ye then avoid being laid under any temptation of affecting a fervour that ye do not feel, avoid unnecessarily protracting the public offices of religion. It is much more eligible, because productive of better conse-

quences, both to speaker and hearer, that the returns to them should be frequent, than that the time spent in continuance should be long. This remark, though it does not so much affect the ordinary offices of public worship,—wherein, if one does not much exceed the usual time, it may be hoped that neither the spirits of the speaker nor the patience of the hearer will be put to any undue stretch,—ought to be particularly attended to in those more solemn services of our religion which require, of necessity, a much longer time: such, for example, is the administration of the Lord's Supper, according to the manner in which it is celebrated with us. As, however, in our church, more, in regard to the time to be employed, depends upon the speaker than perhaps in any other church, care should be taken, that neither his own abilities nor the capacity of the hearers, both for attending to what is spoken, and for retaining it, be put to the stretch: it is

much safer here to leave off sooner than is necessary, than it is to continue longer. Let it be observed, that we have a command for being brief, but none for continuing long in the exercises of devotion. "Be not rash with thy mouth," says Solomon, "and let not thine heart be hasty "to utter any thing before God: for God "is in heaven, and thou upon earth; there-"fore let thy words be few." And a wiser than Solomon has given it as a badge of the hypocrites and the heathen, that "they make long prayers," and act in such a manner as though they thought they would be heard for their much speaking. But I shall have occasion, in the next Discourse on this subject, to consider again this article, under the head of 'Popularity;' and shall therefore desist at present, lest I should be thought to transgress in the way I am condemning.

LECTURE VII.

DANGER TO PASTORS IN OUR CHURCH, FROM AN EXCESSIVE DESIRE OF POPULAR APPLAUSE——TO PLEASE MEN ONLY *A MEANS* TO PROMOTE THE GREAT *END*, THEIR GOOD——INSTRUCTIONS, IN THE SUREST AND SHORTEST WAY, TO BECOME A VERY GREAT MAN, A LEADER AND ORACLE AMONG THE PEOPLE, AND TO SECURE A FOLLOWING, WHITHERSOEVER THE PREACHER GOES.

I HAVE already considered, in the ministerial character, the temptation there may be to hypocrisy; and have pointed out the only method of attaining—and the strong obligations, in point of interest as well as duty, we lie under to attain—a superiority to that temptation, by being what the hypocrite wants only to be thought—virtuous and good. Though no vice be more justly

detestable to an ingenuous mind than hypocrisy, we may say with truth, that to affirm of any profession that it gives a bad man strong temptations to play the hypocrite, is perhaps, in a moral view, the highest commendation we can give of that business or profession. To a superficial observer this may appear a paradox; but all the improbability will, on a little attention, entirely vanish. If the profession or office did not lay him, who possesses it, under strong obligations to virtue, hypocrisy would never be thought necessary, as a succedaneum, to supply its place. On the other hand, in proportion to the detestation with which vice, in any character, will be contemplated, will be the solicitude to recur to this cover for concealing it. It has been observed, that in all sublunary things, it invariably holds, that, good and evil are so connected, and even sometimes intermixed, that it is not possible to attain the one without being exposed to danger from

the other: one species of good is in danger of being confounded with one species of ill, another with another. Temperance is good; but monastic austerity and sourness will often pass themselves on the unwary for that respectable virtue. Sociality is good; but how often do riot and debauchery assume the name! Need I say, how frequently piety and hypocrisy, generosity and prodigality, a due regard to reputation and vain-glory, a proper attention to interest and avarice, are confounded! These virtues and vices are, as it were, borderers together, and ever found in the confines of one another; and the great art of life, the highest pitch of human prudence, may be said to consist in steering our course in such a manner as to enjoy, as much as possible, the good,—and to avoid, as much as possible, being entangled in the evil which borders on it, and may, through inadvertency, be so readily mistaken. I say, *as much as possible*, because, in every in-

stance, to attain the good, and to escape the evil, is more than falls to the lot of humanity. Good and bad qualities, in their highest degrees, are commonly distinguished with ease; it is only in the inferior and fainter shades, if I may so express myself, that they are apt to be mistaken: for though a perfect hypocrite may impose on others, it is impossible he should impose upon himself; he must be conscious that he is not possessed of the character which he wants the world to believe him possessed of. There is no evil of which a man is more certainly conscious, than he is of lying, and of every species of deceit. When this, therefore, is the foundation of his whole character, he cannot be ignorant of it. But I remarked, that there might be, even here, some lower degrees, from which there might be pious men who could not be considered as altogether exempt; and that those degrees, though not so gross as to brand the person with the execrable charge

of hypocrisy, yet must be owned to bear some affinity to that justly hated vice. Let such a disposition, then, only be denominated 'an excessive fondness for the applause of the multitude,' or 'popularity.' It is so arduous a task to regulate properly all our affections and desires, and to prescribe to them the proper bounds to which they may safely be permitted to rise,—nay, to which sometimes it is even proper that they should be raised, but beyond which neither right reason nor the law of the Gospel permits an indulgence,—I say, this is so arduous a task, that it is no wonder so many fail in the execution. To set bounds to the passions and appetites, and to check their rage and turbulence, does, I acknowledge, require, and, if properly sought, will receive, the co-operation of Him, who said to the mighty ocean, "Thus far shalt thou "come, and no farther; and here shall thy "proud waves be stayed."

Now, in order that we may be qualified

for making a proper estimate of popular applause, and for judging, both of the end, on account of which alone it ought to be valued, and the means by which alone it ought to be pursued, let the following considerations be attended to. In the first place, then, it is very plain that the law of the Gospel does not permit us to seek it as an ultimate end, or court it merely for itself. There is nothing we are more expressly commanded, than in every duty, which is properly of a religious nature, to avoid vanity and ostentation. This was the great rock on which the Pharisees split, and made shipwreck of religion and conscience. This our Lord hath particularly exemplified, in fasting, prayer, and almsgiving; but the rule itself is general, and manifestly extends to all those duties of the Christian life, whose very nature does not exclude the privacy commanded. The Apostle Paul, agreeably to the true spirit of his Master's instructions,

says to the Galatians, "Do I yet seek to please men?"—"If I yet pleased men," he adds; if I made that my object; "I should not be the servant of Christ." On the other hand, it may be said, are we not enjoined, by the same authority, to "let "our light so shine before men, that others, "seeing our good works, may glorify our "Father, who is in heaven?" Is it not incumbent on pastors in particular to be ensamples to the flock? Was not this the special study of the Apostles of our Lord? Does not the same Paul declare for himself to the Corinthians, that "he pleased all men in all things?" 1 Cor. x. 33. How are we to reconcile such apparently opposite doctrines and examples?—Let us attend a little.

In the first place, some duties are, in their nature, more private: such, for example, are the duties of secret devotion: such are any particular pieces of self-denial, fasting, or those which a penitent sense of

former transgressions, or a prudent circumspection, may induce us to impose upon ourselves: such, also, are what are called, for distinction sake, private charities, which, oftentimes, it would be inhumane, as well as vain-glorious, to divulge. Yet even in these the Pharisees could contrive to gratify their vanity and pride; and what should have been purely the result of the love of God, of contrition of mind, and of humanity, were no other than so many different kinds of bait, by which they sought to catch the veneration and applause of the multitude. Other duties are, in their very nature, more public: such are those of social worship; a due regard to the external institutions of religion; in all our dealings with mankind, a strict regard to veracity and equity; simplicity, purity, and candour, in our conversation;—I may add, the duties of hospitality, generosity, and what may be called public charity, or a disposition to promote, according to

our ability, every laudable and pious undertaking. In most of these, there is no way of concealing, but by not performing; and therefore, as the performance is a real duty, the concealment can be none: the very matter therefore of those apparently repugnant precepts is totally different. Now it is of the first kind of duties that our Saviour's injunctions of secrecy, and to avoid as much as possible the eye of men, are solely to be understood. It is of the second, which must be seen if they be performed, that our Lord is to be understood; particularly, as commanding us to render them instrumental in alluring others, by our example, to the love and practice of righteousness. I do not deny, that even these last duties may be performed in an unworthy and ostentatious manner,—a manner that is justly reprehensible, and contrary to the spirit of the commandment: but it is manifest, that it is principally of the other kind that our Lord is speaking.

It is the other kind, which, by the hypocritical Pharisee, was made the foundation of his religious fame among the people: it is the other kind, which is employed, for the same purpose, by those who are pharisaically affected at this day. They will not indeed sound a trumpet before them, when they give alms, but they will take a hundred other methods to prevent what they do in this way from passing unobserved. They will not pray standing in the corners of the streets; but they will take care, even at their private devotions in the closet, that, by the loudness of their voices, the neighbourhood shall know how they are employed. And in regard to the notice they give by their faces, of their private humiliations and fastings, they do not seem to have improved one jot, in this respect, on the ancient Pharisees.

But this is not the only distinction to be made between the two cases. There is not only a difference in the subject or

nature of the precepts, but there is also a difference in the motives by which we ought to be influenced, and which may be called a difference in the form, as the other is in the matter. The hypocrite desires to be seen of men, that he himself may have glory of men: the good man seeks not here his own glory, but the glory of God; well knowing, that if his great object be, to be seen of men, and to have honour of men, he has no reward from his Father, who is in heaven. Those works of his, therefore, which must, from their nature, come under the cognizance of his fellow-creatures, he wishes may prove instrumental in advancing the honour of his heavenly Father, by inspiring men with a pious emulation. And this exactly accords with what the Apostle Paul declares concerning himself in the passage lately quoted: "I please all men," says he, "in "all things; not seeking mine own "profit," neither interest nor fame, "but

" the profit of many, that they may be " saved." The honour of God, and the salvation of men, are ends perfectly co-incident.

But it may be said, that, as to the end for which one acts,—or, which amounts to the same thing, as to the motives by which he is influenced,—it is not easy to form a judgment that is entirely to be depended on.—True.—In regard to the conduct of another, it is often difficult, sometimes perhaps impossible, to form any judgment that can be held infallible. The law of Christian charity ought doubtless, in judging of the motives of other men, to incline us, as much as possible, to the favourable side. But in regard to our own conduct, the case is by no means similar. As we must be conscious of the motives by which we ourselves are influenced, if we will take the trouble to attend to them, it must argue a scandalous ignorance of what it most behoves us to be acquainted with—

a shameful remissness in regard to that most important article of our duty, self-knowledge and self-government—if we impose upon ourselves in a matter of such infinite concern. We must remember that the same authority, which expressly prohibits our judging of the motives or principles of others, as we would avoid incurring the severest judgment, hath commanded us to judge ourselves, as one of the most effectual means of bringing us to escape being condemned with the world. And surely, however much they may be mistaken by men, there is a real and an essential difference between acting from a love of virtue, or the desire of doing good, and acting from a thirst of popular applause, a mere principle of vanity and ostentation. But is there no difference in the effects, to which motives so different in their nature will incline the different persons influenced by them? To this I answer, that though, with regard to single actions, motives

exceedingly diverse from each other will influence different minds to the same action, yet, if a whole course of conduct is considered, that which results from the pure and Christian motives of piety to God, and charity to men, will be found, upon comparison, widely different, in its complexion and tenour, from that which knows no nobler source than the love of praise. An indigent person may doubtless obtain equal relief from the alms which the vanity of one has bestowed upon him, as he does from that which the humanity and charity of another have conferred; but it is not by individual acts that characters are to be discriminated. The man, whose view terminates in self, provided his great object, applause, is attained, will not be very scrupulous in regard to the means or the quality of the action by which it is attained. The case is otherwise with the good man.

The rule given by the Apostle Paul

(Rom. xv. 2.) will serve much to illustrate the difference: "Let every one of us "please his neighbour, for his good to "edification." This, and this only, serves as the rule and measure of that popularity, which a Christian pastor ought to study, and which the law of the Gospel strictly enjoins. The motive, by which we ought to be induced to please others, is not self-love, but benevolence; it is not to attain their praise, but to promote their good. And as their real good is the end, the means will be their edification, by which, in the largest acceptation of the word, is meant every thing that has either a useful or a moral tendency with regard to them, whatever may conduce to their true interest, temporal or spiritual. To please men, is a necessary means of persuasion. The Christian orator, therefore, who would persuade them to that which is good, will be far from despising so important means. But in this he differs from the vain man,

that he seeks it only as the means to an end—an end which is never entirely out of his view: the other, on the contrary, seeks it purely for its own sake, or rather for the exaltation and superiority over others that he flatters himself he attains thereby. When the good of others is the end, a man will never be led to please, by gratifying them in what would imply a violation of duty, in what may tend to feed their vanity, or perhaps their envy, their resentments, or other sinful passions. In these, he will oppose them with proper firmness and resolution. To please in such things, would not be for the good of our neighbour, but for his hurt; not to the edification, but to the subversion of his soul. A man, intoxicated with the fumes of popular applause, and to whom this is become the principal object, we find, by too frequent and fatal experience, is not nice on this article, in making distinctions.

I think it necessary to consider this

matter more particularly, because I look upon this rock of 'popularity' as one of those on which persons of our profession, in this country, are more in danger of suffering shipwreck, than perhaps on any other whatsoever. It must be acknowledged, that, from the nature of our ecclesiastical constitution, we are laid under more temptations to this, than in most other churches. I know no other church in which so great a part of the public offices of religion consists in preaching, expounding, or exhorting, as in our own; I may add, in which the minister has so much the direction of the devotions of the people. This, by necessary consequence, will make it more an object to the people in this country to obtain a pastor that in these respects is adapted to their taste, than it can be to those whose pastors have neither so much to do in teaching, nor have so extensive a direction in public worship and the different ordinances of religion.

And though the power of the people be not now so great as it was formerly, in respect of the calling of ministers and bestowing of church livings, it is still considerable enough to induce the preacher, from a motive of interest as well as vanity, to court their favour and applause. Now, when these become the leading motives, it will be found impossible to restrain the disposition within its proper limits. It may be further remarked, that an excess on one hand, with all its evil consequences discovered in some ministers, commonly tends, in those who observe it, to produce a disposition equally excessive on the other hand. Accordingly, if we have some whose very idol may be said to be popularity, we have others who shew a very unjust contempt, both of the favour and of the sentiments of the populace. Both are evidently extremes, and both will ever be carefully guarded against by those pastors who are judiciously solicitous that their

ministry may be profitable to the people of whom they have the charge. By the first extreme, indeed, a man is often put in a capacity of doing more mischief: by the second, he almost totally disqualifies himself for doing good. As, however, the precise boundaries are difficult to distinguish, and as, sometimes, really good and well-meaning men, accustomed, as doubtless they ought to be, to attend to the sentiments of the people, are gradually and unwarily influenced to go greater lengths than a well-informed conscience or just notions of duty will vindicate,—and as this evil, when in its highest degree, has been productive of the very worst consequences to the Christian community, and has proved instrumental in infusing, not the amiable spirit of the Gospel, but, on the contrary, the rancorous poison of a most malignant and opposite temper,—I shall consider more particularly some of its principal features.

And for doing this with the greater facility, permit me, for a while, to assume a borrowed character, and to personate a man who is instructing his pupil, in the surest and the shortest way, to become a very great man, a perfect demagogue, a leader and an oracle among the people, and to secure to himself a following, whithersoever he goes. It is a matter easily attainable; it requires, commonly, good lungs, and strength of body, but a very moderate share of understanding, and no learning at all; a small expense in point of virtue, if what is held scandalous be avoided. Some vices are requisite, but then they are of easy acquisition: it is necessary only that a man be selfish, proud, impudent, envious, and uncharitable. I should then tell the young candidate, that one of the first engines that is commonly and successfully set at work by those idolaters of popular applause, is, to be very liberal in *praising themselves*. The multitude is everywhere

credulous; they rarely fail to be the dupes of the most shameless pretenders; they seem to proceed on a very simple, and, one would think, a very honest principle, that nobody should know a person's character so well as he does himself, and that therefore what they have from his own mouth, on this topic, they have from the best authority imaginable;—hence the success of quacks and mountebanks of every denomination. Would ye then be blindly followed and admired by the crowd, make loud pretensions to an uncommon pitch of purity and zeal; assure them, boldly, that your indignation is moved, in the highest degree, at the prevailing evils, which others seem to be totally unaffected with, and unconcerned about. They will swallow with greediness every word you utter; and you will hardly find it possible to stretch your asseverations and assurance beyond the measure of their credulity.

Another common and powerful engine

of the policy of these demagogues, is, *detraction*. Be sure, as much as possible, to depreciate other teachers. Tell them of the danger they run in hearing them. Every thing is judged of by comparison; be not therefore sparing, rather be profuse, in bestowing the worst and most opprobrious epithets the language can furnish you with. This you will find another excellent expedient of self-praise. They will give you full credit that you must be perfectly free from faults which you exclaim against in others; and the lower you make other teachers sink in the people's estimation, the higher, by consequence, you raise yourself.

A third engine is, be sure to declaim with the greatest vehemence against those vices with which your congregation is *least* chargeable. A preacher of this stamp will be careful, in haranguing the multitude, to inveigh with bitterness against the sins of the great, the rich, and the

powerful; all the tropes and figures of his eloquence will be exhausted in expatiating on their chambering and wantonness, rioting and luxury, levity and profane diversions. —Allow me here, in order to prevent mistakes, to put in this caveat by the way, that, by these observations, I would not by any means be understood to signify that a good and conscientious preacher will ever be disposed to spare the vices of the great, more than those of the small. Far will be such a sentiment as this from every one, who has a true sense of the dignity and the importance of his ministry, as a servant of Jesus. But it has more the appearance of slander and backbiting, than of the rebukes of Christian charity, to bring heavy accusations (however true they may be) against persons that are absent, and for whose crimes those who had no share in them will surely not be called to account. Several circumstances concur to make this device extremely popular to a common

audience; first, it gratifies the envy they bear to their superiors; secondly, it enhances, in their opinion, the courage and undaunted spirit of the preacher, who dares thus attack the highest ranks; thirdly, it is, in fact, a species of flattery given to the hearers. The worse you make them think of others, especially in any kind of excesses of which their consciences cannot accuse them, the better you make them think of themselves. Accordingly, there is no kind of exercise in which they will more cordially join, than in confessing other people's sins: none will be louder in lamenting the crying abominations of balls, and assemblies, and concerts, and what not. The circumstance I mentioned, of fomenting their spiritual pride, gives a particular gratification in the exercise; for they have not the judgment to reflect, that they can claim no praise or merit to themselves for not concurring in vices, which, from their circumstances, they had it not in their

power to commit. But lest I should be thought too severe on this shameful common device of securing the adulation, not to say, the adoration, of the rabble, I would desire you only impartially to consider, whether you ever knew a popular leader, who took the contrary method, and chose particularly to insist, in his sermons, on those vices of which the generality of his hearers had, by their practice, most exposed themselves to be accused,—did you know such a one declaim to his people against the detestable crimes, but too common among the lower ranks, of theft and lying, of fraud and circumvention in their dealings, of calumny and detraction in their conversation? Did you ever hear him inveighing against their uncharitableness in judging of their neighbour, and their self-sufficiency in judging of themselves? Topics of this kind would be branded, by many, with the odious name of dry and heathen morality. But how it

has come to pass that invectives against the vices of the great come to be considered as a more Evangelical topic, nothing would be more difficult than to assign a good reason, though nothing can be more easy than to discover the cause.

I might mention several other inferior arts, which, though not so considerable as the preceding, are not without effect. Among the rest, I would say, be very *loud*, and very *long*, in your religious exercises. With the ignorant, in which class the bulk of the people, I am afraid, everywhere, are to be comprehended, there are two measures by which they always estimate the value of what is said. The meaning is none of their measures, for of that they are no judges; but the only two are, the quantity of what the speaker says, and the noise he makes in saying it. However much, in those respects, you exceed others, the hearers will put the whole surplus to the credit of your greater zeal and greater abilities.

Every preacher should endeavour to speak so as to be heard, otherwise he speaks to no purpose; but if he would be idolized by the multitude, he must stun them with his din. They are not nice in the powers of distinguishing; and therefore readily conclude, that it must be strong sense, that makes a strong impression on their organs.

I have now, I acknowledge, exhibited the character and arts of popularity in the extreme; yet in such an extreme, as some of us, I know, have had occasion to see literally verified. Particularly, when a man is brought to entertain the view of making himself the head and founder of a new party or faction, examine, and you will find him invariably set in motion all those detestable artifices, which I have made it my business to display before you,—not indeed for your imitation,—God forbid! but for your warning. There are, however, some other little disingenuous arts, not indeed so gross as the former, which persons

of too much vanity, though not, on the whole, bad men, (not attending duly to the hazard as well as meanness of such conduct,) unwarily allow themselves to be seduced into. As I purpose, however, to have one other Discourse, at least, on the subject of the Ministerial character, I shall defer the further consideration of this till afterwards.

LECTURE VIII.

FRUITS OF THE TEACHING OF PULPIT CONTROVERTISTS —OF THOSE, WHO INFLAME THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE WITH WHAT THEY TERM THE DEFECTIONS OF THE CHURCH.——ENGAGE NOT IN A COMPETITION WITH OTHERS IN THE COMMON POPULAR ARTS, AS IN THE CHOICE OF SUBJECTS OF DISCOURSE, OR, ON CERTAIN OCCASIONS, AN UNSEASONABLE PROLIXITY. —*ZEAL* ATTENDS CHIEFLY THE SPIRIT OF RELIGION —*BIGOTRY*, TO AN EXTERNAL CONFORMITY AND PROFESSION.

In my last Discourse, on the character of a Christian pastor, I considered the temptations, which, in our ecclesiastical constitution, the minister lies under, to cherish, even to excess, a passion for popularity: I pointed out to you some of the most distinguishing features of this inordinate affection, and the detestable arts, by which

those, who are in their whole conduct actuated by it, seek to gratify it. I own the picture I gave was of that vice in the extreme, in order that the lineaments might be the more strongly exhibited, and the more easily recognised when occasion should require. But do not think that the drawing was from imagination—No; it was from real life. The instances, I believe, are but few, that would exactly suit it;—Would God there were not any!—but that there have been, and still are, such instances, consists, if I mistake not, with the knowledge of some of my hearers. Such of you, as have had occasion to know already, or shall have occasion to know afterwards, the methods employed by those, who think fit to turn Separatists, and whose ambition it is to exhibit themselves to the world as the founders of a new church, or, as perhaps they would term it, the restorers of the old, will be satisfied that I have used no exaggeration in the picture I have drawn:

for, whatever be the pretended difference in doctrine (which commonly lies in a jargon of words, alike unintelligible to themselves and to the people), both from the church from which they separate, and from one another, you will find them, in regard to the practical part, all cordially united in employing the same artifices, for gaining and securing their influence over the giddy multitude. And I pray you take notice, if you should ever have the occasion, whether their artifices (in which they are very unanimous, however much they differ in other points) be not invariably those before enumerated. Whenever you happen to meet with one, who affects to head a sect or faction, observe, I pray you, whether it be not the great scope of his teaching, by all the address and power of insinuation he is master of, to exalt himself as a saint of the first magnitude, to blacken all other teachers to the utmost of his power, and to declaim vehemently against the vices

of those, who are not so happy as to commit their understandings and their consciences to his keeping and direction. Whether this be preaching themselves, or Christ Jesus the Lord, let the serious and impartial say.—I pass the smaller arts of vociferation, prolixity, and a few others; in which, indeed, there will often be found a greater variety, according to men's different bodily powers. These, it may be truly said, are very common engines of popularity; but the three first are indispensable to the man, to whom this is the ultimate object and aim.

Indeed, though they are but few that go all the lengths above mentioned, are there not too many, who, in some respects at least, too much resemble them? I do believe, indeed, that some have fallen into an improper and unjustifiable method in this respect, from simplicity—from a mistaken zeal, (I will not entirely free them from vanity,) but without any deliberate bad

intention. Such will sometimes go to undue lengths, in throwing out insinuations against the doctrine taught by some of their brethren. I believe it is, because they really think it dangerous that they act so. But is it not possible, that the censurer, and not the censured, may be in the mistake? And have we any better title to dictate to our brother, than he has to dictate to us? Can either claim the prerogative of infallibility? And as he will think himself entitled to equal freedom in censuring your doctrine, what will be the end, when the pulpit is made, as it has sometimes been made, the scene of theological disputes? Will this promote the interests of truth and virtue, of pure and undefiled religion? —Far from it.—Instead of enlightening the understanding, it will but inflame the passions, which never fail to cloud the judgment, and incapacitate the mind for the discovery of truth. We ought ever to remember, "that the end of the com-

mandment," of that glorious dispensation of which we are the ministers, "is charity, "out of a pure heart, and of a good con- "science, and of faith unfeigned." Whatever wounds charity, we are certain, strikes at the vitals of religion. The cases are very few, in which we can be as certain that we advance the cause of religion by engaging the people to attend to our disputes. The Apostle Paul seems to have thought, that it was one of the surest indications that charity was deserted, when we suffered ourselves to be involved in them: for observe, he immediately adds to the preceding declaration,—"From which some "having swerved, have turned aside into "vain jangling." Is there any thing he more warmly advises Timothy, who was also a minister, to avoid, than engaging in contentions of this nature; which he very properly denominates "profane and vain "babblings, and oppositions of science, "falsely so called?" How justly does he

paint the common consequences, when a people are unhappily habituated to this sort of entertainment from their teacher, who is ever "doting about questions and strifes "of words; whereof," says the Apostle, "cometh envy, strife, railings, evil sur- "misings, perverse disputings, of men of "corrupt minds"!

If ever your experience should lead you to be acquainted with a people, who are under the tuition of such a pulpit-controvertist, I would entreat you to remark the temper which it produces in them. Does it sweeten their disposition, and make them more meek, more humble, more patient, more candid, more charitable, than their neighbours? or, on the contrary, does it make them more proud, more captious, more calumnious, more suspicious, more disputatious? If, upon the most impartial inquiry, you shall find that this last is the common effect, can ye have a stronger demonstration of the badness of the practice?

Are we not taught, by the great and only infallible teacher, Jesus Christ, to distinguish teachers and teaching, as we distinguish men, by their fruits? Can that teaching then be good, which produces such malignant, bitter fruits? Nothing then can excuse controversy in the pulpit, but necessity; and there is no necessity, unless the point in question be manifestly an essential article of Christianity, and unless there be an immediate danger of perversion among the people to whom you would communicate the dispute. But, to say the truth, where this polemic itch prevails, it will wait no necessity. The people often do not so much as know that the doctrine they have been taught is controverted by any body, till they are officiously informed of it by their minister; and for the much greater part, the subjects in debate are merely the glosses and comments of fallible men, and not the dictates of the unerring Spirit. As for you, teach your people the truth, to the best of

your knowledge; enforce upon them their duty, to the utmost of your power; urge all the motives which the Gospel and right reason supply you with; but give no evil surmisings with regard to others. If others do not right, they have the same Master to account to. It is not necessary, in any event, that your people should know of it. Nor can I conceive a motive for informing them, unless to exalt yourself by the comparison. But would not that be, in the strictest sense, preaching yourselves? Would it not be acting from a spirit of pride and envy? And how different this is from the spirit of Christ, ye are not ignorant. May I not therefore apply, in this case, the injunction which Paul gave to Timothy,—and in him, to every minister of Jesus, particularly to every one who might be employed in training others to the ministry,—and charge you, before the Lord, "that ye "strive not about words, to no profit, but "to the subverting of the hearers? Study

to shew yourselves approved unto God,
" workmen that need not be ashamed,
" rightly dividing the word of truth. But
" shun profane and vain babblings; for
" they will increase unto more ungodli-
" ness."

And if impartiality obliges me to censure those who endeavour to raise themselves by depreciating their brethren, and who cherish in their people a most vitiated appetite for contention and debate,—what shall be said of those (and such we have known) who inflame the minds of the people with what they term 'the defections of the church' whereof they are members, not to say, children, and the tyranny of her judicatories? I do not deny, that there might be crimes in our ecclesiastical superiors, which would fully justify this conduct; such as idolatry, such as an express renunciation of any of the fundamental articles of Christianity, such as the imposition of terms of communion, which could

not be accepted with a good conscience. These were the grounds of our dissent from Rome. But this conduct, like resistance in the State, is ever to be held as the last resort of the most urgent necessity. All government, all subordination, all order, is overturned at once, if every man shall think himself entitled to rail and clamour, whenever he disapproves, or is dissatisfied. Is it not the uniform doctrine of Protestants, that no church whatever is infallible; that societies, no more than individuals, can claim this high prerogative? Can I then reasonably expect, that, in their laws and decisions, they should never err? And if I did expect or demand this, would I not act most preposterously against the principle on which I found? This is requiring in the effect, what I acknowledge is not in the cause. Is it one jot better, to expect an unerring conduct from a fallible society, than to require omniscience from those whose knowledge is limited? Those, indeed,

who take this most unchristian method, appear invariably to found on one principle,—that whatever others be, either as individuals or as communities, they themselves are infallible in their judgment; since, without the least hesitation or modesty, they dictatorially pronounce every thing to be corrupt and wicked, that does not perfectly coincide with their own sentiments.

I acknowledge, indeed, that truth is not to be determined by numbers; but if, where differences in thinking arise, there is to be no acquiescence in the awards of an established order, it is absurd in men to pretend to have, or acknowledge, any government or rule. The manifest tendency of the leading principle of such conduct, is, *As many men, as many churches:* for a perfect unanimity in thinking, between any two persons who are at all capable of thinking, is an idle chimera, and therefore not to be expected. Such as are not disposed, in

regard to many differences in judgment, " to " bear with, and forbear, one another in " love," agreeably to the injunction of the Apostle, are not qualified for living in the world; they ought to turn recluses, and no longer mingle in the societies of men. I have sometimes known a teacher of this stamp, who, having set out on this wild, not to say, impious plan,—having extinguished in his people all deference to superiors, and infused, on the contrary, a contempt of authority and rule as radically corrupted,—has found at last, that all his blows have recoiled upon himself, and that the people have, in consequence of his ill-directed labours, imbibed a principle, which has rendered them as incapable of being guided by *him*, as he wanted to make them in regard to his and their superiors;—thus, I may say, " receiving in himself that recompence of his error which was meet." Many instances might be produced, in which the factious spirit of the disciples has outrun

the views of their teacher, and carried them further than he has thought it convenient to go. Let us at least allow the community to which we belong the same equitable treatment that we think incumbent on us towards one another. To admonish a brother of his faults, when we have a proper opportunity, is a duty of friendship, as well as of Christian charity; but to rail against him to others in his absence, to expose his faults, to magnify them,—nay, I may say, to fabricate crimes, where there are none, by all the vile arts of misrepresentation, and that to his friends and relatives, his children and domestics, under pretence of warning them,—seems to be the offspring of a spirit, to which I shall leave it to every impartial person to assign the proper name. Admit that there are some grounds of complaint, (as in what human society are there not?) use the power and influence with which, as a member of the society, you are regularly invested, in order to remedy what you think

amiss; bearing, at the same time, with becoming patience and humility, the evils which you are not authorized to correct: above all things, take care, that, in order to correct a less evil, ye do not precipitate yourselves into a greater; and, for the sake of repairing some inferior part that is damaged, ye do not unhinge the whole. The Christian community to which we belong ought to be regarded with the reverence due to a parent. Let us dread, then, lest we do any thing to incur the indelible stigma, which, to this day, renders execrable the memory of Ham, who basely exposed his father's nakedness;—let us rather imitate the dutiful conduct of his more pious brothers, who acted such a part, on that occasion, as will, to the latest ages, be mentioned to their honour. I should not have been so particular on this article, if I had not considered it as one of the greatest evils and the greatest dangers to which the profession of a preacher in this country

exposes him;—'*Hinc illæ lacrymæ!*'—hence our secessions, and methodisms, and reliefs, and independencies, and what not; besides many divisions, under different denominations, amongst ourselves, which, though they have excited indecent and unchristian heart-burnings, have not yet come to an open rupture. Could we but persuade men to pay due regard to these two important lessons of inspiration; "Not to "think of themselves more highly than "they ought to think, but to think sober-"ly;"—and not to value "the honour which "cometh from men, but to value that "honour only which cometh from God;" there would be very little occasion for many words on this article. That noted idol, the '*popularis aura*,' which has so many votaries, and to which so many costly sacrifices are daily offered, is the great bane of our harmony and peace. But as the greatest ills arrive gradually at what may be called their perfection in badness; and

as they will sometimes arrive at a pitch, in this respect, which the persons infected by them at first never dreamt of; it is of consequence to warn against the beginnings of this plague. The ancient apophthegm, '*Principiis obsta*,' is a precept of unspeakable importance, in regard to all the ills of human life, both physical and moral.

I have said so much already on the proper regard due to the people,—on the attention which the conscientious pastor will find it reasonable to pay to their sentiments,—and on the care he ought to take not wantonly to shock even their prejudices,—that I should think it quite superfluous to use any other cautions, to prevent my being misunderstood, in regard to the faultiness of a deficiency on this head. In respect of the other extreme—the excess, I shall beg your attention to those precautions which follow. First, be cautious, when, in any instance, you are lucky enough to gain the favour and applause of the people, that ye

do not over-rate this advantage. Remember, that it is only to be valued for their sakes, not for your own,—as a means, and not as an end. In this last view, it is below the regard of a wise and good pastor, who ought to be far superior to the little vanity of deriving any gratification to his pride, from the praise of those who, in general, may be supposed, in point of knowledge and attainments, his inferiors.

A second caution I would give on this article, and which perhaps will be thought a natural consequence of the former, is, never, on any consideration, to allow yourself to engage in what may be called a rivalry for popularity with any of your brethren. That ye should be solicitous that none may be more punctual in the faithful discharge of the duties of your office, is a pious and commendable emulation; but if the object be, who shall stand highest in the people's favour, it is a thousand to one but you entangle yourself in low and unworthy

artifices. There is this difference between a virtuous emulation and every other rivalship, that, in the former, the view of the virtues and good qualities of another, so far from giving pain, give pleasure—not only from charity, but as they are spurs to our diligence,—and encourage our hope, by shewing us how much is attainable, where there are proper exertion and perseverance: whereas every inferior rivalship is but too commonly productive of envy, the ugliest of vices, which does not so naturally prove an incentive to excellence in the envious, as it does to detraction. A person, influenced by this devilish passion, never fails to consider, that his own superiority is as effectually maintained by sinking others, as by raising himself; and as that is both the shorter and the easier method, it is what he will most readily have recourse to.

The last caveat I shall give on this head, is, carefully to avoid every thing that looks like competition with others, in what

may be called the common popular arts; such as being directed, in the choice of a subject, more by the consideration of what will please the people ye address, than by the consideration of what will edify them. As there were in the days of Isaiah, there still are, and probably ever will be, some "rebellious people, false children, children "that will not hear the law of the Lord: "who say to the seers, See not; and to the "prophets, Prophesy not to us right things, "but speak unto us smooth things." A teacher, however, who, in a point of this nature, shall be more disposed to gratify the people's humour than to instruct and improve their minds, I must consider as in a great measure lost to all the valuable purposes of his ministry; he manifestly sacrifices the end to the means;—for their spiritual improvement should be the great end of his charge. He deserves, therefore, at best, no higher appellation than that of a 'prophesier of deceits,' (as such conduct is

termed by Isaiah,) if he considers more, in his teaching, what will be palatable to the bulk of his congregation, than what will be instructive. This may be affirmed, with justice, concerning him, even though none of the things he might advance could be justly said to be false ;—his aim and design are deceitful. It is not enough that he preach truth; it must be *the* truth, which they stand most in need to be told: and where there are popular prejudices of this kind, against hearing either the doctrines or the duties of religion, we have reason to conclude, that the truth, which they need most to be told, is that which they are least inclined to hear.

Another too common popular art, is, on certain occasions, a very unseasonable prolixity. The ignorant, as I once observed formerly, are but too apt to estimate the value of what they hear from the quantity: wherever that is the case, I am satisfied there is no ground to expect that the un-

derstanding should be much enlightened, or the affections corrected, by what they hear: they have a sort of gratification, and conceive more of their duty to consist, in the hearing, than in the effect which it has upon their minds, or in any use afterwards to be made of what they hear. The bulk of most congregations are much the same with us as they were in Israel, in the days of the Prophet Ezekiel: they are ready enough to say, "Come, I pray you, and let us "hear what is the word that cometh forth "from the Lord. And they come unto "thee, as the people cometh; and they sit "before thee, as my people; and they hear "thy words; but they will not do them; "for with their mouth they shew much "love, but their heart goeth after their "covetousness. And, lo! thou art unto "them as a very lovely song of one that "hath a pleasant voice, and can play well "on an instrument; for they hear thy "words, but they do them not." Preaching,

and the public ordinances of religion, are to such of no more consequence than the entertainment that is received from vocal or instrumental music—they amuse and gratify while they last, but leave no effect behind them: nay, in this respect, the former is the worse, and the more dangerous amusement of the two; inasmuch as those, who use it in this manner, are but too prone to give themselves credit for real devotion and sanctity, in proportion to the time thus employed, and to the gratification which they find in the employment: whereas of the latter we may say, at least, that if it does no good, it does no harm; since no man is disposed to take a merit to himself from such exercises. One bad consequence, therefore, of immoderate length in our religious offices, is, that it tends too much to feed a superstitious disposition in the people, and thereby to divert their attention from that which ought to be the main object—the improvement they make

of what they hear. It is the duty of a pastor to wean his people as much as possible, by every method which prudence dictates, from all prejudices and misconceptions, in a matter of such unspeakable consequence. Immoderate length, in all kinds of religious offices, has ever had an influence on weak and superstitious minds: and for this reason, those who have hypocritically affected the religious character, have ever chosen to distinguish themselves by this circumstance. The Pharisees, who made use of religion as a cover to their pride and extortion, "for a pretence," as our Lord tells us, "made long prayers." He, who never spoke a word in vain, did not add the epithet '*long*' unmeaningly: the length of their devotions, as well as the breadth of their phylacteries, and the largeness of the fringes at the corners of their garments, were all so many engines of their craft. Dr. South, speaking of some popular leaders, who rivalled one another in respect of their

influence on the multitude, takes notice of a new sort of gymnastic exercise, in which they engaged, unheard of among the ancients, which he denominates, emphatically enough, '*preaching prizes*;' that is, as I understand it, vying with one another who shall hold forth longest. Can any thing of the nature, use, and end of preaching, be understood or regarded, where such a pharisaic trick is put in practice?

I would not, by all this, be meant to signify, as though we could with propriety, on all subjects and occasions, confine ourselves within the same compass, which was never to be exceeded: I think that is neither natural nor necessary. What I would chiefly dissuade from, is, whatever savours of ostentation in this particular, or shews any disposition to vie with others in regard to it. The due time to be employed in the public exercises of religion, is, like the circumstances of most other practices, determined very much by custom. The atten-

tion and patience of the major part will generally keep up pretty well for as long a time as they expect, from common practice, that there will be a demand for their attention, and as they have been habituated to give it. If that time be much exceeded, unless there be something so very particular as to command attention, it will naturally flag, and end in weariness, impatience, and even sometimes disgust. Besides, it should be remembered, that as attention cannot always be preserved, so the memory, being finite, may be overloaded. It is always safer here to leave off, whilst the people have an appetite for more, than to cloy, by giving them too much. But it may be said, that the appetite of some persons is here insatiable. Depend on it, wherever that is the case, it is a false appetite, and followed by no digestion: the whole significancy of those exercises to such, is the time spent in them, and the transient emotions they feel when thus employed. By the immoderate

length, therefore, of public devotional exercises and religious offices, the patience of the intelligent hearer is worn out, the superstition of the ignorant is cherished, the spirits of the performer are very unprofitably exhausted,—and that service, which ever ought to be attended with real pleasure, is both to him, and part of his audience, rendered burthensome. What I have now said, is to be applied principally to those more solemn religious offices, which, on account of the parts whereof they consist, employ much more time than others. Brevity is here chiefly to be attended to, in treating the several parts: this deserves particularly to be observed in the sermons and discourses which are given on occasion of the Communion. By the manner in which that service is protracted in many places throughout this country, (to which, we may justly say, the immoderate desire of popularity does not a little contribute,) a certain mixture of

fanaticism and superstition is propagated among the illiterate, which, as it tends to subvert the genuine spirit of rational religion in their own minds, does by no means serve to recommend the religious character to others, who, though of greater discernment and knowledge, will not take the trouble, when prejudiced by outward appearances, to enter so far into the subject as to distinguish between the use and the abuse. But I have said enough, perhaps too much, on this article.

I shall not suggest any thing to fortify you against the temptations of pride and ambition, which have been likewise laid to the charge of the Clerical character. It has been maintained by some, as an undoubted maxim, that "Priests of all religions are the same." Nothing, in my opinion, can be more unjust. The doctrines to be inculcated, the offices to be performed, the nature of the ecclesiastic establishment, from which all their temporal hopes and

prospects must be derived, are so exceedingly different, and even sometimes repugnant in what are called different religions, that it would destroy all the principles of moral reasoning, to suppose that their tendency should be the same. In our own constitution, for example, in which we have no hierarchy, no superior dignities nor wealthy sinecures, and in which, it is notorious, that we do not make the same pretensions with others to supernatural and indelible sacredness in the character, the ministers of religion have by no means the same temptations to pride and ambition, that they have in many other churches, both Popish and Protestant. At the same time, impartiality obliges me to own, on the other hand, that there is perhaps greater temptation with us than is found in most other churches, to the fault which I have been so warmly warning you against, namely, an excessive desire of popularity.

It has likewise been charged upon the

order, that the very business in which they are engaged, has a tendency to foster, in them, bigotry, and a persecuting spirit. Though there may be some truth in this charge likewise, it is very far from being the same in all religions: the importance of every thing that concerns religion, the particular interest which its ministers have in supporting it, the habit of having their attention so much fixed on this object,—all tend, in weak minds, to be productive of these consequences; and among so numerous a body, as this order of men is in every country, it is not to be expected that all should be superior to their influence. *Bigotry*, as distinguished from zeal, may be defined, an immoderate attachment to the exterior of religion; under which term, I include not only the forms and ceremonies of worship, but those tenets in particular, which are considered as the badge of the party, whereby it is discriminated from all others. As the attention of true *zeal* is

chiefly fixed on the interior—the spirit and temper of religion, it seeks to promote it, in others, by the only suitable means—argument and persuasion. *Bigotry*, which looks not beyond the surface, aims chiefly to produce an external conformity and profession, from whatever motive or principle such conformity shall flow; and, for this purpose, is ready to employ violence, where argument fails. From this simple definition and distinction of these two, the following consequence may be plainly deduced:—The more absurd the speculative and distinguishing tenets of a party are, and the more numerous and fantastical their ceremonies, the more there will be of bigotry in that party, and the less of what alone deserves the name of pure Christian zeal. The reason is obvious: and that the fact is conformable to this doctrine, History but too plainly shews. In proportion as the Church declined from her ancient simplicity, adopted absurd dogmas into her

system, and vile superstitious mummeries into her worship, she separated herself from the truly benevolent spirit—*zeal*, and contracted an intimacy with that unrelenting fury—*bigotry*. Reason and argument are but ill adapted for maintaining the cause of absurdity and nonsense: racks and gibbets, fire and faggot, answer infinitely better. Hence it may easily be perceived, why the Church of Rome, of all churches, is most infected with this infernal tyranny; and that other churches will have more or less of it, as they more or less approach to her in the respects above mentioned. As, however, in every church, there will be some tendency to this evil, in weak and illiberal minds, whose attention is chiefly fixed on the outside of things, it is very proper that every one, who would act a part becoming the servant of so divinely humane and benevolent a Master, be particularly watchful against every approach of this demon: "The weapons of our warfare," says the

Apostle, "are not carnal; but mighty, "through God, to the pulling down of "strong-holds;" for doing what no carnal weapons can effectuate—"casting down "imaginations, reasonings, and every high "thing that exalteth itself against the "knowledge of God;" for subduing the mind, not the body; "and bringing into "captivity every thought, to the obedience "of Christ."

LECTURE IX.

OF SLOTH.——WEALTH, A GREAT, BUT NOT THE ONLY CORRUPTER——NEITHER OUR SCANTY PROVISION, NOR OUR ECCLESIASTICAL LAWS, A SUFFICIENT SECURITY AGAINST THE RISK OF LAZINESS——EXTREMELY RIGOROUS LAWS FALL INTO DISUSE——MANY, NOT QUALIFIED, ATTEMPT EXTEMPORIZING IN THE PULPIT——THIS CONTRIBUTES TO LAZINESS, AND TO OUR LOSING THE HABIT OF COMPOSING——THE PRACTICE OF COMPOSING OF THE GREATEST CONSEQUENCE TO US——THE PROPER EMPLOYMENT OF TIME, AND THE ADVANTAGES OF FOLLOWING A SETTLED PLAN.

I HAVE, in the three last Lectures on the Ministerial Character, warned you against some of those vices, to which, it is thought, there is, in this profession, very strong temptation; namely, hypocrisy, an immoderate pursuit of popularity, and an unrelenting bigotry, or persecuting zeal.

There is another vice, of which, I think, a minister in this country is in some danger from his profession; and that is, *sloth*; a vice, against which it is of very great consequence, to all of us, to be ever on our guard. But how, it will be said, can we be thought to be in particular hazard of this fault, when it is considered how much almost every minister of this country must be occupied in the necessary parochial duties, which give but little scope for relaxation, and still less for idleness? Here we have neither sinecures nor pluralities, nor those fat benefices, which can liberally support, with the title of Rector, a lazy drone, who minds no other business, but to eat, and sleep,—and can afford an overplus, to serve as a pittance to a drudge, called a Curate, for doing all the work. We are, besides, by our ecclesiastical laws, obliged to residence; and not permitted to serve by a delegate, except in case of age or infirmities. Where, then,

can be the risk of laziness? Are we not sufficiently secured against this, by the scantiness of our provision, as well as by the nature of our ecclesiastical constitution? I acknowledge, that one would think so, who would duly consider how much the laws of our church require of the ministers, in regard both to teaching and to discipline; and how little the pastors are enabled, by their livings, to do more than is just necessary, in a sober and decent manner, to support their own families. Indeed the latter, the smallness of the livings, is the more powerful check of the two; for that the best ecclesiastical canons may be eluded, and certainly will be eluded, when the opulence of the ministerial offices is so great, as not only to afford the temptation, but to supply the possessors with the means, of eluding them,—nay, and of screening from danger the persons who elude them,—what has already happened in the Christian church may serve as a sufficient evidence.

Nothing can be conceived purer, stricter, or better calculated for securing a punctual supply of necessary instruction and direction to the Christian people, and enforcing the watchful diligence and attention of their pastors, than the regulations subsisting in the primitive church, for the first three hundred years; yet nothing can exceed the torrent of corruption, which an immoderate and sudden influx of wealth, in a few ages after, introduced. The attention of expectants came soon to be engrossed by the revenues; without any consideration of the duties, unless to devise expedients whereby they might be superseded. Charges came to be as solicitously and openly courted, as, in former times, they had been very sincerely and modestly declined. When only the value of the benefices came to be regarded, those who had them at their disposal, knew how to rate them: hence a natural introduction to venality and simony. Those who pur-

chased, would readily think they had a right to sell, and make the most of every thing; and that they held their livings, for which they had paid, by another sort of tenure than the discharge of the duties of the office: hence, non-residence, sinecures, commendams, pluralities, substitutions, and I know not what. It is a certain maxim, that no laws are of significancy enough to bind men, when manners are lost. The law—What is it?—A dead letter: it cannot execute itself; it must be executed by men. When men are generally vitiated, they are never at a loss for pretexts, whereby they can explain away those laws, which, in a corrupt state, will find few, or none, that are both able and willing to support them. When manners are on the decline, but not entirely lost, it is not uncommon in legislators, from a sense that the wise regulations of their predecessors are losing their force, to think of remedying the evil, by making new laws, with sanc-

tions much severer than the old. I think there are some symptoms of this decline in ourselves, which appear, in some late acts of assembly, against simoniacal practices. But no expedient can be weaker, or less adapted to the end:—a law, extremely rigorous, is sure of falling soon into disuse: many more crimes escape with impunity, and thence become more frequent, in consequence of the excessive rigour of the law, than in consequence of its lenity. When the law breathes more of passion than of reason, we may be sure it will answer no good end; and it is not uncommon to see the same men, in the character of lawgivers, immoderately severe, who, in the character of judges, shew an immoderate indulgence.

But it may be said, if wealth is the great corrupter of manners, there is perhaps no church in which there is less danger of corruption than ours. I admit the truth

of this position also. The church-livings in this country are rather under, than above, what would appear suited to the rank and character necessary to be maintained in a station, which, in order to be more extensively useful, ought always to be preceded by a liberal education. This, however, is perhaps the safer extreme. But wealth, though a great, is not the only corrupter:—we have little indeed; but what we have, we enjoy with great security: security produces ease; ease is is apt to beget indolence, and to deaden zeal. Discipline, we must all be sensible, is exceedingly relaxed amongst us: the relaxation of discipline emboldens men to transgress: and though there are but few who will be induced, by this reflection, to allow themselves in what is really scandalous, we cannot be surprised, that a considerable degree of remissness, in regard to the active duties of their function, should come too generally to prevail. Of this

there is the greater hazard, as it commonly creeps in by insensible degrees. We are in general (I say not that it holds of every individual) more inactive, more negligent, than our immediate predecessors; but then the difference is inconsiderable, and probably little attended to, or minded. The difference, in each succession, is very little; but in a number of successions becomes very great. Now, if our successors should continue to fall short of us, and theirs again of them, there would be some reason to dread, that the people would generally relapse into the same ignorance and depravity, with which the Christian world was overwhelmed at the time of the Reformation. In the establishment of our Church at the reformation from Popery, our church-rulers shewed the greatest solicitude, that this evil might effectually be prevented in future ages. In Popish times, preaching had, for several centuries, been universally disused: neither bishops, nor

secular priests, considered it as any part of their charge. In some cathedrals, and principal churches of populous cities, they had sometimes sermons on high festivals, or in the time of Lent; but preaching, in general, had fallen into the hands of the regulars, chiefly the Begging Friars, who were licensed by the Pope, and who found this a useful engine of their trade, which was, to draw money to their monasteries. The other way of teaching in public, by reading the Scriptures, I have observed to you in my Historical Lectures,[1] had been rendered totally useless to the people, by being performed in a language which they did not understand.

It was very commendable in the reformers, and even necessary, to devise proper methods for preventing this evil in time to come: several were devised, wherever the

(1) See the Author's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, vol. II. page 247, &c.

Reformation took place, which have proved exceedingly useful. Beside the translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar language, and the establishing of parochial schools, wherein the children, even of the poorer sort, might either gratuitously, or, on very low terms, be taught to read them, they appointed that the people, even in the most populous parishes, should be annually, and, where it could be effected, oftener, catechized by the minister. The founders of our church-establishment, in particular, have ordered, besides that a great part of our public service, especially on the Lord's Day, should be occupied in teaching; and that, as well by reading the Scriptures to the people, as by expounding them, which we commonly call 'lecturing,' and by preaching. I own, that, in respect of the two last, the zeal of our reformers has led them rather to exceed the proper boundary, than to fall short of it. I know not by what corruption, or perversion of taste (for it is

by no means agreeable to our standards), the two last, lecturing and preaching, have, in a manner, altogether jostled out the first, and most important—the reading of the Scriptures; for, except what is done by the Precentor in this way, before worship begins (and even this usage is not universal with us), the practice of reading a portion of Scripture to the congregation, has, in a manner, become obsolete; for we cannot surely account it a sufficient discharge of this duty, to read a few verses, which are made the subject of our lectures? But the article, on which I think our church-governors have exceeded, is the number of discourses required weekly from the ministers,—no less than three for the greater part of the year, and two for the remainder. Now this is really more than can be reasonably expected from any man, who would attentively digest his subject, and carefully prepare the instructions he intends to give: it is so much the harder to require this, as

a minister cannot, in consistency with the other essential parts of his duty, employ himself entirely through the week, in preparing the discourses he must give the people on Sunday. Now, the necessary consequence of exacting so much, is, that the preparation will be rendered, in this way, much more superficial than otherwise, and his discourses inferior to what they might have been. The difficulty, at first, appears to be increased, by the custom which still, in general, prevails throughout the country, of not reading the discourses, ut speaking them; which is commonly thought to pre-suppose, that the preacher has not only composed and written them, but has committed them faithfully to his memory. Now, to say the truth, this is a task, which, to the much greater part of preachers, would be absolutely impossible, and therefore ought never to have been imposed; for, when more is exacted than, in the time allowed, can be executed in the

best manner, they will, they must be, (for there can be no fault where the effect is necessary,) performed in a more perfunctory manner. This often forces men, who are not qualified for it, to attempt extemporizing, or, at least, holding forth with very little preparation. The consequence is, that either they lose the habit of composing, or contract a habit of composing in a slovenly manner, which rarely leaves them ever after; though even, from a change of circumstances, they should happen to have more leisure, as well as longer time, to finish properly what they undertake. In this northern region, indeed, use has, in effect, abolished part of what our canons strictly require: but enough still remains to furnish us with pretty close employment through the week; as there are two discourses weekly, for one half of the year, and one for the other. The necessity, in many places, (that we may avoid shocking too much the prejudices of the people,) of

delivering, as it were, *vivâ voce*, the instructions which we give them, has, I am afraid, on the whole, done more hurt to the pulpit compositions in this church, than ever it has done service. To compose so many discourses in so short a time, to write them, and to get them by heart, without neglecting any of the other necessary functions of a minister, is hardly practicable for one-tenth of mankind, taken at an average. If sermons must be spoken, in order to be attended to and regarded by the people, there is no help for it; a preacher must do his best, to gratify them in this, rather than throw an obstacle in the way of edifying them. But if they must be spoken, and not read, who will warrant that they must be written,—that they must be composed,—nay, that they must be preceded by any premeditation or study? Nor let this be thought an unreasonable suggestion. When more work, in one way or other, must be performed, than a man

has time to undertake, part must be neglected. If he has succeeded tolerably, notwithstanding the deficiency of preparation, he will next be emboldened to venture further, spending daily less time than formerly in preparation, as he becomes more familiarized with the task of preaching. This habit will be greatly accelerated, if the minister consider his audience (which in many places may be done without great vanity or presumption) as much inferior to himself in knowledge and improvement.

Let it not be imagined, from any thing now advanced, that I universally prefer reading, to speaking a discourse: I do by no means. When the latter is executed in perfection, it is greatly preferable to the former, however well executed. But I am quite satisfied, from the experience and observation of many years, that the former is a much easier, and more common attainment, than the latter. Besides, though few

seem properly sensible of it, there is a very great difference between speaking an oration, and repeating verbatim what has been servilely committed to memory. I shall only say for myself, that I have tried both ways; and I am certain, that I can read with much more energy, than I can repeat what I have gotten by heart. A man is more at his ease in the first case; he is without fear; and has leisure to enter fully into the sentiments. In the other case, there is an attention necessary, to the words, and to the run of the sentence; and a fear of losing the thread, which it is scarcely possible entirely to surmount, and which keeps the mind suspended; and so hinders it from being completely engrossed, as it ought to be, with the subject and thoughts. But this question belongs more properly to another part of my Course, on which I have freely given my opinion.[1]

(1) See the Author's Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, lately published, p. 333, &c.

There is, however, one objection urged against reading, rather than repeating, our pulpit exercises, which deserves to be considered in this place; where it is my particular view, to excite to activity in the discharge of every duty, and to warn against sloth and remissness. It is sometimes argued, that to dispense with the toil of committing to memory, is to encourage laziness, to which no man is less disposed than I to give indulgence. But, let us consider; the whole weight of this objection depends on the decision of the former question,—Which of the two ways, reading or repeating, would, upon the whole, taking men's talents to be such as they generally are, be preferable? For if the former be, in general, preferable, to employ more time and labour to no useful purpose, deserves not to be called activity: it is, in fact, a misapplication of talents, and a mis-spending of time; to husband which properly, is so far from being laziness, that it is one of the most profitable

sorts of economy we can learn. Labour, whether of body or mind, is no farther valuable than it is profitable, either in itself, as a salutary exercise, or for the attainment of some good end. But I will acknowledge freely, that the thing, which makes me so little inclined to think that it ought to be made an indispensable rule with preachers to repeat the discourses they give to the people, is, that I know not any thing which has contributed more to laziness, in respect of composition and preparation for the pulpit, than the strong prejudice which, I acknowledge, still prevails in many places, though not so much as formerly, against using papers in the pulpit. I know there are many—I do not hesitate to acknowledge that I am one of the number—who would have much more labour, and would waste more time, in getting a discourse by heart, than in composing and writing it; and, consequently, that if I had continued, as I began, to confine myself to this method,

I should have much obstructed, instead of forwarding, my progress. I know, too, that this is not the case with every body. There are some, who find it a very easy task. To those who do so, and who can pronounce what they repeat with tolerable energy and grace, I would by all means recommend this method, in preference to reading. The only thing I disapprove, is, to make this a general rule, and to consider it as in a manner indispensable. Those who have slower memories, if ye will make it absolutely necessary, will soon learn to dispense with the task of composing and writing what they dare not use, in the only possible way, after it is composed and written. I speak from experience; and I own to you, that I have often regretted, that, from considerations of this kind, in the first nine years of my ministry, when I had the charge of a country parish, I very much lost the habit of composing; which I did not find it so easy a matter

afterwards to resume, as I expected; though, in consequence of resolution and perseverance, I did at last surmount it. Whereas, if it were permitted, (I do not say *enjoined*,—for that would be a fault in the other extreme,) and if it were no subject of offence, to read our discourses from the pulpit, six times as many would be written as are at present; and, I think, we may reasonably conclude, that our ministers would be more active, and their sermons in general more instructive, than as matters stand at present: for the writing would insure one thing at least, that some thought and study would be bestowed on them.

But whichever of the two methods you, my Hearers, shall adopt, (for in this you ought to be directed by the prudential considerations of the sentiments of your people, and of your own abilities,) do not by any means allow yourselves to fall out of the habit of composing. A man never

more effectually instructs himself, than in preparing instructions for others. Nothing is of greater consequence to us, if ever we would be eminent in our profession, than the practice of composing; it tends at once to form a habit of reflecting on what we hear, and what we see, and what we read; to give a command of language, and facility of expression; and, also, to infix in our memories, and render, as it were, our own, the most important reflections, which either reading or conversation has furnished us with. It is by duly tempering these three,—reading, or study; conversing, or the practice of the world; and writing, or composing,—that we shall have the greatest probability of arriving both at knowledge and at usefulness. Any one of them, without the rest, will never lead to eminence: and we ought to remember, that, without the art of communication, knowledge loses much of its utility in a pastor. To render composing

easier, I would earnestly recommend you to begin it early: you will find that you have more leisure at present than you can ever enjoy when you have the charge of a parish, provided you possess a proper sense of the weight of such a charge, and the nature and importance of the duties it requires. There are, no doubt, those, on the contrary, who make the charge of a parish a very easy matter to them; grow indolent and careless; and, if they can acquit themselves so as to escape the censure of their superiors, think they have sufficiently discharged their duty. If a man's chief object, in choosing this business, be a livelihood, this way of thinking is a very natural consequence: such will always account it enough, that they do what they must. A man whose heart is in the service, and whose great object is to be useful to his people, especially in what concerns their most important interests, will not be satisfied with himself, unless he do all he can. That ye

may be able to do much, begin early: ye are now at the time of life proper for preparing, laying in materials, and forming habits, which, if duly improved, will greatly facilitate your progress afterwards. If neglected, your task will be much harder; and, consequently, the temptation will be stronger, to make a light account of it.

Learn, above all things, to put a due value on time: youth has a strange propensity, to think that there is nothing of which it can afford to be so lavish. About the age of twenty, every man seems to fancy that his stock of time is inexhaustible; and that he is in no danger of a criminal prodigality, in whatever way he squanders the flying hours. There cannot be a more egregious or dangerous mistake, whether a man's years (which, beforehand, must be utterly uncertain) shall be few or many. Not only, by such conduct, is so much time irrecoverably lost, which might have been profitably and creditably employed; but

the worst is, that thereby a habit of inactivity and remissness is contracted, not easily afterwards to be overcome, especially when permitted to be of long continuance. Now, this ought particularly to alarm you, as it gives you but too good a reason to suspect, that the present waste of time will prove the earnest of much greater profusion afterwards. Evil habits (as has been often justly observed) are of quicker growth than good; whereas, if ye begin early to pursue the way that is most beneficial, custom will render it most easy and delightful. Nothing conduces more to this good purpose, than to act upon a plan or system; to portion out your time beforehand; dividing the day, as it were, and assigning to each part its proper employment;—part for reading on such a subject, or in such a language; part on such another; part for any necessary business ye may be engaged in; part for composing; part for relaxation and exercise. These, doubtless, ye may

vary, as ye find occasion. Or ye may enlarge your plan, and appoint different subjects of study and exercise, for different days of the week. Of this every one must judge, according to his convenience and particular occasions: but there are great advantages in following a settled plan.

One advantage is the saving of time; for, when a man has no fixed scheme of proceeding, a great deal of time is often lost in hesitancy and irresolution, between leaving off one thing and entering on another. A second advantage is, constancy; for a man is not so easily diverted from a pursuit, which he has deliberately adopted, and regularly persisted in for some time, as from that which he takes up occasionally, by fits and starts. A third is, that the return of the stated hour of any particular employment proves a subject of recollection to him, to call him off from what might prove an avocation; and is a powerful monitor against sauntering and idling away the time. I shall

add a fourth, that, as this gives a probability that his studies will be more methodical, he will unquestionably derive more benefit from them. Nothing is of greater moment than method, for making a course of study both distinctly apprehended, and strongly remembered.

I would not be understood, by this proposal, as affirming the propriety of tenaciously adhering to any plan of this kind, once formed, whatever occurrences may happen to render the prosecution of it extremely inconvenient, if not impracticable. Two things must always be admitted, as good grounds of interruption at least; and sometimes of a change, in whole or in part: these are, necessity, and opportunity. The first, (necessity,) when we cannot, either at all, or without great inconvenience, persist immediately in the projected course. Perhaps it may be necessary (as in the case of want of health) to interrupt our scheme for a while:

perhaps it is only necessary, as when the proper books cannot be had in any branch of study, to desist from that branch till the inconvenience be removed. In this case, we ought quickly to devise some alteration, so that the time formerly allotted to that study, in which we cannot now be occupied, may be profitably employed in some other article of our pursuit. I allowed, that opportunity was also a good reason for interruption: I mean by this, when an occasion shall present itself, (which, if we let slip, may not be soon, if ever, recovered,) of answering some important purpose, in regard either to ourselves or to others. An occasion of doing good, and of being useful, is never to be neglected: this is an end, and a principal end, of our existence. All study, reading, writing, &c. are but as means to fit us for conducing to that end. To neglect the end, when opportunity presents it, for the sake of the means, would not shew a very just appre-

hension of the subordination of duties. For this cause, the minister of a parish, though he may, in a good measure, pursue the same plan with the student, must expect to meet with more interruptions; and ought always to except the cases, wherein the the good of his parishioners may require his time and presence. But the many avocations and interruptions ye will be necessarily then exposed to, ought to be a powerful incentive to you at present, both timely to lay in a stock of useful materials in the different branches of necessary knowledge, and, as soon as possible, to acquire those habits of exertion, which will greatly facilitate your progress afterwards. By your advancement in knowledge, you advance in a general preparation for all the duties of the ministerial office; by spending part of your time in composing, you may make much particular preparation, beforehand, for the pulpit. It is not easy, I own, to induce young men to look

so far before them. But if they could be persuaded, I might venture to promise them, they would find their account in it, and have great satisfaction in reflecting afterwards, that they have taken this course.

Remember, that the whole of our business and duty in life may be said to consist in the right application of our talents, by the proper use of our opportunities. The man whom this description perfectly suits, whatever his station in life may be, is a good man, and a virtuous citizen. Wherever ye see a total misapplication of talents, there ye find a character entirely the reverse. What may be called the non-application, exhibits the character of the sluggard,—an intermediate between the former two, but much more nearly related to the last than to the first. As iron unemployed contracts rust, which corrodes and eats into the very substance of the metal, the mind of man, if left in a state of inaction,

is quickly vitiated, contracts languor, discontent, peevishness, and many hurtful passions that prey upon its peace. If ye will not cultivate the soil, and sow good grain in it, it will require no cultivation, no sowing from you, to make it produce a plentiful crop of useless and noxious weeds. Thorns and thistles it will yield you in abundance.

THE END.

Watts, Printer, Broxbourne, Herts.

Published for BLACK, PARRY, *and* KINGSBURY.

1. COLLYER's, (Dr.) LECTURES on SCRIPTURE FACTS, 8vo. boards. 12*s.*
2. ———————— on PROPHECIES, 8vo. boards. 12*s.*
3. ———————— on MIRACLES, 8vo. boards. In the Press.
4. CRUDEN's CONCORDANCE, New Edit. 4to. boards. 1*l.* 16*s.*
5. MASON's SELF-KNOWLEDGE, Foolscap 8vo. boards. 5*s.*
6. NEW MANUAL of DEVOTION, 12mo. boards. 5*s.*
7. TALIB's REMARKS on DAVID LEVI, 8vo. boards. 6*s.*
8. WEST on the RESURRECTION, 8vo. boards. 10*s.* 6*d.*

ORIENTAL BOOKS.

9. ASIATIC ANNUAL REGISTER, (published Annually,) 8vo. 1*l.*
10. BRUCE's ANNALS of the EAST-INDIA COMPANY, 3 vols. 4to. boards. 4*l.* 10*s.*
11. BUCHANAN's MYSORE and CANARA, 3 vols. 4to. 6*l.* 6*s.*
12. DANGERS of BRITISH INDIA, by D. HOPKINS, Esq. 8vo. 7*s.*
13. DUDLEY's METAMORPHOSES of SONA, 12mo. boards. 6*s.*
14. EAST-INDIA REGISTER for 1812. 12mo. 8*s.*
15. ———————— VADE MECUM, or a Complete Guide for Gentlemen intended for the Civil, Military, or Medical Department of the East-India Company, by Capt. THOMAS WILLIAMSON, 2 vols. 8vo. boards. 1*l.* 6*s.*
16. GILCHRIST's BRITISH-INDIA MONITOR, 2 vols. 8vo. bds. 4*l.*
17. ———————— STRANGER'S GUIDE. 9*s.*
18. ———————— HINDOOSTANEE DICTIONARY, 4to. boards, 4*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.*
19. GLADWIN's GULISTAN, in *Persian*, 8vo. boards. 16*s.*
20. ———————— in *English*, 8vo. boards. 10*s.* 6*d.*
21. HOPKINS's PERSIAN VOCABULARY, boards. 1*l.* 16*s.*
22. JONES's PERSIAN GRAMMAR, 4to. boards. 18*s.*
23. RICHARDSON's PERSIAN DICTIONARY, by Dr. WILKINS, 2 vols. 4to. boards. 12*l.* 12*s.*
24. WILMOT's SCRIPTURE LEXICON, in *Arabic*, 4to. boards. 1*l.* 1*s.*