

A
MODERN PLAN:

UPON WHICH

The MINDS and MANNERS of YOUTH
may be formed :

O R,

A COMPENDIUM of MORAL INSTITUTES
made familiar, and adapted to the Circumstances
of the present Age.

WITH A

PREFACE, inscribed to *Parents, Guardians, and
Tutors.*

Caleb Fleming

*It is a very important lesson, to learn how to enjoy ordinary life,
and to be able to relish your Being without the transport of
some passion, or gratification of some appetite.*

SPECTATOR N^o. 222.

*If the tenour of our actions, have any other motive, than the de-
sire to be pleasing in the eye of the Deity, it will necessarily fol-
low, that we must be more than men, if we are not too much
exalted in prosperity, and depressed in adversity.*

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THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS and TUTORs.

A Performance of this nature requires no apology. The design none can condemn: though the execution of it many may censure. But this would have been the case had it been drawn up by the ablest hand. The Author would not have published this plan, if he had not had a good opinion of it himself; and likewise presumed, that there might be others who would approve his little system.

The scheme has five divisions in it, viz.

I. Of God's name:

II. Of the human passions; } *their objects and*

III. Of the appetites; } *operations.*

IV. Of the imagination; it's objects and operations.

V. Of religious character; how attainable.

Under these heads, the prevailing vices of the age are exposed, and the rules of avoidance given.

It is free from party-opinions, and those disputable things which have been prejudicial to most catechetical compositions: so that it aims at universal use, whatever may be its success.

The most important notions and useful representations of GOD, are made easy and intelligible. And both the sentiments and language are such as may suit almost any age of instruction.

The branch of self-knowledge is somewhat labour-ed; and makes a principal part of the plan: upon which the growing virtue of the youth is supposed to depend.

Public-benefit would certainly be obtained in the use of some such scheme ; for all must allow, that there is not any thing more conducive to the good of a community, than the imprinting early on young minds the first principles of truth, oeconomy, and virtue. And the method is most reasonable ; because the prejudice or bias which it gives, will bear the critical examination of mature age, and approve itself to the reason of the man.

The most formidable objection to the reception and application of this plan of instruction, seems to be, the too great relaxation of moral principles, and the customary unhappy licences taken by many parents and tutors : since it will make it the less easy with them to inculcate principles on children, which openly condemn their own want of oeconomy. But then, there is this consolation offers itself, viz. that Parents ordinarily wish the regularity and virtue of their children, tho' loose in their own morals.

If LIBERTY civil and religious, the peculiar glory of Britons, shall remain inviolate, the virtue of Protestants must, by all possible means, be improved ; and none can bid fairer than that of sowing the Seeds in early Life, and by a religious care watching over the young plantation.

Should the author be so happy as to contribute in any small degree to the assistance of those who have children under their tuition, he shall rejoice in this labour.

He is,

With great devotion,

Yours,

PUBLICUS.

A Modern Plan.

SECT. I. *Of God, and his Name.*

The Tutor and Youth.

Tutor. **I** Am desirous of giving you information in those things which do most concern you.

Youth. *Pray what are the things which do most concern me?*

T. To know God, and yourself.

Y. *What is God?*

T. He is, what no one else is : he has had no beginning, and can have no end.

Y. *How may I be convinced of that?*

T. By considering, that no creature could either make itself, or be made by another creature ; so that all creatures must have been made by one who is not a creature : and this Maker of all is God.

Y. *This proves that God is, what no one else is : but how does it prove that he had no beginning, and can have no end?*

T. Thus ; that Being who made all other beings, could have no Maker of himself, and so could have no beginning.

Y. *How may I more fully be convinced of this?*

T. By considering, that some one Being must have all-perfection, and so be unchangeable.

B

Y.

Y. *What is the meaning of all-perfection ?*

T. It meaneth all wisdom, all power, and all goodness : which must ever have been in some one being, or it could never have belonged to any one being. But what has all wisdom, all power, and all goodness now, could never be less or more than what it is ; and so could have no beginning.

Y. *But may there not be more Gods than one ?*

T. No ; because one God having all Perfection, there is no need of another.

Y. *Why so ?*

T. Because he knows all things, that can be known, and can do all things that can be done, by a wise, powerful and good Being.

Y. *Is there any other way of proving that there is but one GOD ?*

T. Yes ; the word, God, signifies one that has dominion, or is a supreme Governour : but if one God made all things, he only has a right to govern all ; and another God there cannot be, because he would have nothing to govern.

Y. *I see reason to conclude, that there can be but one GOD : is he of any shape, figure, or form ?*

T. No ; for he is equally present every where ; he is a pure spirit : he has no parts or body.

Y. *Why is he spoken of in Scripture, as having eyes, ears, arms, hands, feet and wings ?*

T. To help our conceptions under these figures.

Y. *How do they help our conceptions ?*

T. Thus ; the eye of God signifies, or imagineth to us his knowledge and perfect understanding : his ears, his attending to the voice of his creatures : his arms, denote his power : his hands, the activity of his wisdom and power : his feet, the measures or paths of his proceedings : and his wings image to us his protection and defence of his creatures.

Y.

Y. *What general notion may I most usefully form of GOD?*

T. Think of him as every where making, preserving, and governing his creatures.

Y. *Is he not to be seen?*

T. No; but in his works?

Y. *How may I see GOD in his works?*

T. By observing marks of his wisdom, power, and goodness in all the parts of the visible creation: or in the make and use of them. Thus the invisible things of him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal Power and Godhead.

Y. *Does GOD live in heaven?*

T. Yes; and on earth too, and every where else.

Y. *Why is GOD so often spoken of; as if he had his dwelling in heaven?*

T. Because he is the supreme, or the highest being; for the word, heaven, signifieth high. But there is no place either high or low with him, who is every where.

Y. *Why was I taught morning and evening to say, Our father which art in heaven?*

T. It was to lead you to look upon GOD as your father, in the highest sense, and to pray to him as such.

Y. *Is GOD my father?*

T. He will be so, if you fear him and keep his commandments, or if you live just as you pray to him.

Y. *When may I be said to live as I pray to him?*

T. When you hallow his name, and do his will here on earth, as it is done in heaven.

Y. *What is it to hallow GOD's name?*

T. It is to fear him because of his majesty and power ; to love him because of his wisdom and goodness ; to trust in him because of his wisdom, power, and goodness ; and to rejoice in him as the everlasting support of your being.

Y. *May I not mention the word, GOD, whenever I please ?*

T. You must not do it without reverence ; for he is jealous of the honour of his name.

Y. *May I not call upon God to witness to the truth of what I say, when I chuse to do it ?*

T. No ; for that is of the nature of an Oath. Now an oath is a solemn, judicial thing, which should only be taken where evidence is required to determine life or property : or as some religious expression.

Y. *Is there any other way of hallowing the name of GOD ?*

T. There is ; for his name signifies his authority ; so that to hallow the name of God, is to keep his commandments.

Y. *What is meant by God's authority ?*

T. The right and ability he has to give law, and to enforce the Observance of it by rewards and punishments.

Y. *Will not this destroy my liberty, or the freedom of choice in me ?*

T. No ; if it did, all men would observe God's laws, because they would not be at liberty to transgress them.

Y. *What then do you mean by enforcing the observance of God's laws ?*

T. I mean only, that God's setting before men the advantage of keeping his laws, and the disadvantages of breaking them, is a proper argument to be used with reasonable creatures ; and which does persuade all who use their reason.

Y.

Y. *If I make GOD's will the rule of my actions, how may I be said to act freely?*

T. There is no other way of being free : because his will is perfect reason, and your doing it, will shew you to be reasonable. And not to do it, is to be in Slavery to some lust.

Y. *How may I know in any instance, that in doing the will of GOD, my will is free, or I assert my own liberty?*

T. This you may know, in all those instances, wherein you follow the advice of your best friends, and are convinced that in your doing so, you are pursuing your true interests. Be persuaded that God is your best friend,* and that he cannot be mistaken in the advice he gives ; and you will see your liberty is secured in the doing of his will.

Y. *I see it plainly.—What will render me capable of keeping all GOD's commandments?*

T. Your loving him with all your heart ; and your neighbour as yourself.

Y. *Why must I love GOD with all my heart?*

T. Because his favour is your life, and his loving-kindness is better than your present life ; or than all perishing good things.

Y. *Who is my neighbour ? and how must I love him as myself?*

T. Every man is your neighbour. And to love your neighbour as yourself, is to do to him, as you would he should do to you ; was you in his circumstances, and you in his.

Y. *This is a plain and good rule : but how shall I be qualified for the observance of it?*

T. By considering what it is that they may reasonably expect from you ; comparing their circumstances and abilities with your own. For you must not only be honest and just in your dealings with others, and faithful to your promises and engagements

ments, but you must be compassionate and pitiful to their necessities and miseries.

Y. *Is this to love my neighbour as myself?*

T. It is.

Y. *Will this rule direct me in my behaviour towards my prince, and those who are civil magistrates?*

T. It will; for if you was the reigning prince, you would expect loyalty in your subjects, and due honour from them; or if a magistrate, you would expect to be supported in the execution of good laws. So that tribute must be given to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; and honour to whom honour.

Y. *Are not those tradesmen, who deal in goods that have not paid the duties and customs which the law has appointed, men who do not love their neighbours as themselves?*

T. They are.

Y. *I have now some knowledge of the rule, which obliges me to love my neighbour as myself: I farther ask, will my loving GOD with all my heart, and my neighbour as myself, enable me to keep all GOD's commandments?*

T. Yes; for on these two, hang all the law and the prophets.

Y. *How does that appear?*

T. Very plainly: for by thus loving GOD, your love of all other things will be regulated: and thus loving your neighbour, will enable you to forgive his offences against you: and all other duties will be more easy.

Y. *Will not GOD be a father to me without all these things.*

T. No.

Y. *Are not all men GOD's children, as he has made, and does preserve them?*

T.

T. None are, in the sense I am speaking of, but those only who know the will of God, and do it.

Y. *Will not my being born of christian parents, and my having been baptized, determine me to be a child of God?*

T. No; nor your professing yourself a christian, and constantly attending the services of the church every Lord's Day.

Y. *How is that?*

T. Because wicked men, may, and often do make a religious profession.

Y. *Pray let me ask, why Sunday is called the Lord's Day?*

T. Because on that day of the week, Jesus, the son of God, the christian's Lord rose from the dead. And christians have observed that first day of the week, as a festival sacred to the memory of his victory over death. Sunday is the heathen, Lord's day is the christian's name for the day.

Y. *May I not follow any civil employment, such as a trade, or sporting exercises on that day?*

T. No; it would be an offence to all the pious and devout, who think it their duty to offer public prayers and praises on this day; and who consecrate it to the purposes of religion.—and it would be a violation of the Statute Laws of the Land.

Y. *What advantage does usually attend the keeping of this day holy?*

T. Many advantages: it preserves a veneration of God; it has an apt tendency to civilize the mind; to fill it with benevolence; and to improve it in every virtue.

Y. *What do you mean by the word virtue?*

T. Virtue, is the power or principle you have of doing well——the virtuous man, is the man who accustometh himself to do well. Or virtue is the
consent

consent of actions with the excellency of man. It cannot be acquired without pains and exercise, and will increase by practice.

Y. *Was I born with virtue?*

T. No ; but with faculties and powers of becoming so, as they open.

Y. *Does my virtue depend upon the right government of my appetites and passions?*

T. It does.

Y. *What reasons are there for public worship on the Lord's day?*

T. Because Christians may be joint-partakers of the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection,—— and are joint-partaker of national blessings, or of national evils ; such as seasons of plenty or scarcity ; healthy or sickly seasons ; a condition of peace or war.

Y. *Is there any authority for the observance, from the New Testament.*

T. Yes ; Jesus himself, being made under the Law, as his custom was, went into the Synagogue, on the Sabbath-day. And his apostles, and the first Christians, after his resurrection, met together on the first day of the week for religious exercises.

Y. *Will this vindicate the change of the day, from the seventh to the first?*

T. The bulk of the Christian world, in all ages of Christianity, have thought so, and have practised upon it.

Y. *But do not many neglect the publick worship of this weekly holy-day?*

T. They do ; and for the same reasons, that they omit such acts of homage, others might ; and of consequence no such acts would be performed : so that public virtue would be lost.

Y.

Y. *But do not some of the worst of men attend public worship?*

T. Yes; and it is not to be wondered at, that they do; for the best of men do attend such worship: but the worst men often chuse to mimic in appearance the best.

Y. *Pray shew me the reason of this?*

T. It is, that they may the better carry on their worldly or wicked schemes, under the cloak of religion.

SECT. II. *Of the human passions: their objects, and operations.*

Y. **I** *See the reasonableness of public worship, and of keeping holy the Lord's day; what is farther requisite to my becoming a child of God?*

T. You must, thro' daily labour, improve in the knowledge of yourself, by the government of your passions and appetites; and by studying God's moral perfections, and imitating of them.

Y. *What is meant by the government of my passions?*

T. It meaneth, that your love and hatred, your desire and aversion; your fear and hope, your sorrow and joy, should always be well examined by you; that so you may neither love nor hate things that are not proper to be loved or hated: and you must take care that what you desire or dislike, fear or hope, be worthy of those passions.

Y. *In what respects may I observe this rule?*

T. You will best know how to apply this rule, as you feel these passions excited, or rising in you.

Y. *What are those evil dispositions that may most disorder the passions?*

T. Pride and Humour.

Y. *What meaneth pride?*

T. It is a vice*, or lusting of the mind that expresseth vanity, or a too high and too fond an opinion of ones-self. This makes a person humour some; that is, not easy to be pleased, and easily offended.

Y. *This is an hateful disposition.*

T. It is; and pride is often the parent of envy.

Y. *What is envy?*

T. Envy is a base disposition: it is a painful, uneasy state of the mind, occasioned only by the good which another enjoys; and to which we have no right or claim.

Y. *How does pride produce envy?*

T. As the envious man thinks himself more deserving of those good things which he sees others in possession of.

Y. *How may I know when men are proud and envious?*

T. By their variance, strife, contentions, quarrels, fightings and wars.

Y. *Would there be none of these things in the World, were it not for pride and envy?*

T. No.

Y. *How must I keep myself free from these lustings of the mind?*

T. By humble, modest thoughts of yourself; and a generous benevolence or good-will to others.

Y. *Pray shew me wherein I may mistake in my love, affection, or esteem?*

T. You may err greatly in the choice of your intimates and companions.

Y,

* Vice is the opposite to virtue; and lust, is the irregularity of an appetite or passion.

Y. *What choice should I make?*

T. Of such as you have reason to think do fear God, and keep his commandments.

Y. *May I not preserve my virtue, tho' I should have a vicious companion?*

T. It will be difficult ; for *Solomon* says, he that walketh with the wise, shall be wise ; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Y. *But what if I am obliged to be much in the company of wicked persons?*

T. If you cannot avoid them, you must never countenance their wickedness ; but always shew your dislike of it, as far as your ability will enable you to it.

Y. *I see reason for avoiding the company of wicked persons, as much as I can ; pray how must I chuse a friend and confident ?*

T. You should have proofs of his fidelity, discretion, candour and generosity. For the more good properties you find in him, the more likely is your friendship to be durable.

Y. *Is there any other respects in which my love may be regulated ?*

T. Yes ; self-love must, in some cases, be subdued and overcome.

Y. *What are those cases ?*

T. When a public-good may be obtained by sacrificing private property ; and even our own lives must be devoted to the safety and preservation of our country.

Y. *Is this reasonable ?*

T. Yes ; it is natural to love the country where we first drew our breath—and that constitution that protected our parents, whilst they educated and provided for us. The relation of countrymen with whom we have entered into the near communica-

cation of benefits, and close sympathy of affections gives great force to the passions.

Y. *What else will justify the laying down of my life?*

T. The cause of truth and religious liberty. For which we have the example of Christ, and his apostles, and those first *christians*, who were real martyrs.

Y. *But have not papists pretended to serve the cause of religion, by putting men to the sword?*

T. They have: and therein have fulfilled a prophecy, *namely, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

Y. *Is religion to be propagated by the sword?*

T. No; they who thus use the sword, shall perish by the sword.

Y. *Whence come wars and fightings?*

T. From mens lusts; it is pride and envy that disturbs the peace of the world.

Y. *May I not avenge myself of a private injury or affront, though at the hazard of my life?*

T. No; for in civil society, the laws are the guardians of your rights; which forbid that you should be your own avenger.

Y. *May I not accept a challenge?*

T. You must not; because your life is not at your own disposal. But you are accountable to God and your country for the hazard of it.

Y. *If I be challenged and fight, and kill my antagonist, shall I be guilty of murder?*

T. You will; if it can be proved that you had the full use of your intellects.

Y. *But if I refuse a challenge, I shall be posted for a coward?*

T. May be so: but they who thus treat you, proclaim themselves fools. For they are fomentors of rebellion against the public-authority.

Y.

Y. May I not lawfully kill another in defence of my own life?

T. Yes; self-preservation is the first principle in nature, which warrants self-defence against the violence of villains, who aim at your life and endanger it: if you have no other way of being secured from their malicious intention.

Y. Pray, what is true courage?

T. It is a firmness of mind, that enables a man to behave well in every station and relation, in spite of all reproach and ill-treatment.

Y. I now see the evil effects of pride and envy: how must I govern my fear, so as to make that a virtuous passion?

T. You must not be terrified with any apprehensions of spirits or apparitions in the dark; which are childish, idle notions. And you must be afraid of no man whilst you are doing what is your duty.

Y. How shall I have this passion under constant government?

T. By considering that God is, at all times and in all places, present with you: and that he only is to be feared by you.

Y. Will this quite free me from the passion of fear?

T. No; fear will have place, considered as a desire of avoiding evil that may threaten you. And is very useful to excite proper endeavours to avoid evil.

Y. But shall I not in this, fear something besides God?

T. In a sense you will: but then your fear of evil will be subordinate to the fear of God, and will not disturb your peaceful enjoyment of yourself. So that there will be no vice, in that fear which you have of evil.

Y. How does that appear?

T.

T. Thus; your fear of GOD, will prevent your taking any unjust, or unworthy measures to avoid the evil feared: it will also enable you to support under the evil, if it should overtake you.

Y. *Pray give me an instance wherein the fear of evil, has wanted the regulation of the fear of GOD?*

T. All those are instances, where men have laid violent hands on themselves, in order to avoid some evil which they apprehended would come upon them. And even many women, from a dread of public infamy, have murdered their bastard-children.

Y. *These are very full and special instances: are there any that are more general?*

T. Yes; all liars are cowards; they are poor, mean-spirited wretches, that can sacrifice truth for fear of sustaining some little inconvenience: or for fear of their base designs being understood by others.

Y. *Is lying a proof of cowardice?*

T. I am persuaded that it always is: for a man who fears GOD supremely, can never be a liar.

SECT. III. *On the appetites; their objects, and operations.*

Y. **I** Thank you for these directions about my passions: but did not you say something of my appetites?

T. I did.

Y. *Pray what do you mean by the appetites?*

T. I mean, hunger, thirst, an inclination to recreation, and to sleep.

Y. *How must I govern these? must I not eat, and drink, and play, and sleep when I have occasion?*

T.

T. You ought to gratify these appetites ; but then you must use your reason * in the gratification. For you may desire food that would injure your health : or take it in too great quantities.

Y. *Is not the end of eating and of drinking, to satisfy my appetites of hunger and thirst ?*

T. No ; the end of eating and drinking is the health of the body, and to aid and support its vigor and activity : though God has kindly implanted appetites to food, in order to excite us to labour for, and take due care about it.

Y. *By what name do you call excess in eating ?*

T. Gluttony ?

Y. *What is the name you give excess in drinking ?*

T. Drunkenness ; and each excess tends to disorder both the mind and body.

Y. *You said something of the desire after recreation, must I not play ?*

T. Yes ; recreation is certainly proper, when close attendance to your book, or to your business shall require it : but then it should be recreation ; that is, such as will give a new spring and desire to labour and industry.

Y. *But may I not divert myself with laborious exercise, such as running, leaping, or dancing ?*

T. You may ; but then these should be rather called exercises to improve the strength and agility of the body, than recreations : for what are recreations, do restore and refresh after fatigue.

Y. *May I not play at cards, chess, &c. which employ the thought and require the utmost attention ?*

T.

* Reason, is that faculty of discerning the difference between good and evil, truth and falsehood ; as they appear in their nature and tendencies, without consulting the passions or appetites, or basely following their directions.

T. You may ; but not as recreations. They are rather sciences or studies that give the mind fatigue ; and should be reckoned as a sort of labour.

Y. *May I lawfully divert myself, at any of those amusements, called, gaming ?*

T. If you mean by it, that you may play for money, I should think it quite unlawful ; not only because our statute laws condemn gaming ; but because it has a most evil tendency.

Y. *Have our laws condemned gaming ?*

T. Yes ; “ they make all securities obtained by
“ gaming, void,—the advantage of poundage,
“ otherwise allowed a bankrupt *, will be denied
“ him, if he has lost 5*l.* in one day, or the sum of
“ 100*l.* within a year before he became a bank-
“ rupt.—If a man challenge to fight another for
“ money, won at play, he forfeits his personal
“ estate.”

Y. *How does gaming appear to be an evil in itself ?*

T. It appears an evil in itself, because a man loses or wins money upon a vile principle, namely, covetousness. There is nothing to support the change of property, but humour and fancy. Now God never gave any man leave thus to put his own substance into the hand of chance and hazard, at his pleasure.

Y. *But may I not divert myself at cards, dice, &c. playing for a small matter, that I know will not hurt my estate, nor injure those I play withal ?*

T. I should think it would have a bad tendency, by begetting in you a love to gaming : for by little, or small beginnings men have been trained to a habit

* A Bankrupt, is one that has gotten into his hands the goods or money of others ; and to avoid the demands of his creditors, hath hid himself, or hath been denied to them.

bit * of gaming, that have ruined fine estates, and made wretched many families.

Y. *May not a gamester be a man of honour ?*

T. A gamester is one of the worst characters under the heavens. If he supports himself on gaming, it is only by over-reaching of his companions ;—his manner of life is more infectious and, injurious to society, than that of an highway-robber.

Y. *How so ?*

T. Because gaming is the parent of robbery, and of almost all other public mischiefs : and the disposition to gaming, is, perhaps of all others, the most difficult to get rid of.

Y. *I think, I see the unlawfulness and evil of gaming.*

T. I hope you do ; for there can be no reason why I should take from a man the fruit of his honest labour, because I have shook the dice with more aces, † or sice-point than he. And the same might be said, if his Parents have left him an estate ; they never intended I should have it from him only for the shaking of my elbows.

Y. *Does not gaming indispose men to all honest labour ?*

T. Nothing has a greater tendency to debauch the mind, and indispose for any laudable employment : so great is the infatuation of gaming, that the gamester thinks himself more obliged to pay a debt of honour, as he calls it, than a just debt.

Y. *What does he mean by a debt of honour ?*

T. What he lost at gaming.

D

Y.

* Habit, is a custom, that is become as natural and easy as a man's clothes.

† These are terms made use of for the numbers, one and six on the dice.

Y. I see no honour, but great evil in gaming : and I hope I shall abhor it !——pray what other appetite am I to govern ?

T. That desire you find to rest, or sleep.

Y. How am I to use my reason about the sleep which I take ?

T. You are to take only such quantities of rest and sleep, as by experience you find do best enable you to labour ; or are most for the health of your body, and the vigour of your mind.

Y. May I take too much sleep ?

T. Yes ; and it is a sign of sloth, when men give sleep to their eyes, and slumber to their eye-lids : that is, when they take more sleep than nature would require.

Y. I perceive that I must consult my health and interest in the government of all my appetites, as well as my passions ?

T. You must ; and your virtue as well as health will depend upon it.

Y. Is there any other appetite that you have not mentioned ?

T. There is.

Y. Pray what is it ?

T. It is the desire of the sexes.

Y. What of this ?

T. God has made man male and female. And by his providence preserves the sexes nearly equal : for about thirteen males are born into the world to twelve females.

Y. Say you so ? then there can be but one woman for one man.

T. There cannot.

Y. But did you not say there were thirteen males to twelve females ?

T. Yes.

Y. *What may be the reason of more men than women being born into the world?*

T. It is to supply the extraordinary mortality that the men are liable to *above* the women, from wars, and other perils.

Y. *I see then that no man should have more than one woman, nor no woman should have more than one man?*

T. This is the law of God, and the appointment of providence.

Y. *But has God directed how every man may chuse his wife, and every woman may chuse her husband?*

T. He has.

Y. *How has he done it?*

T. By implanting a desire to the sex, which must be regulated by an agreement of affection, or liking towards each other, or else the *marriage* will be unhappy.

Y. *When is the proper time to think of marriage?*

T. When you are at years of discretion, and are qualified to take upon you the *cares* and *charge* of a family; and have the opportunity of an agreeable yoke-fellow.

Y. *May I gratify the desire before I marry?*

T. No; for *whoremongers* and *adulterers* God will judge, or condemn.

Y. *What is the reason of that?*

T. Because whoredom, like too much wine, takes away the heart, and spoils the virtue. And if you will take a view of the evils that *whoring* introduceth, you must read and study, *Prov. v. vi. and viiith. chapters.*

Y. *Am I accountable to Society, if I violate this law of God?*

T.

T. You are ; for by *whoring* you not only injure your own virtue, but you violate the property of others ; for you must have an sole absolute property in the person with whom you unite, or the union will be unlawful.

Y. *How shall I arm myself most effectually against any temptation to offend against this law of God ?*

T. By considering it, as God's law ! That it is at the peril of your virtue, reputation, and honour, if you comply with any temptation. Think also how wretched many make themselves by becoming unchaste ; and how few are restored by bitter, keen repentance !

Y. *But what must I think of men and women, who marry several times ?*

T. This is no violation of God's law ; because the death of the former wife, or husband has dissolved the former marriage.

Y. *Do not many, who are called fine Gentlemen, hold matrimony in contempt ?*

T. They do ; but then they have no reverence of God. For if they had, they would reverence his institution.

Y. *Do not Papists forbid marriage, to persons in religious orders ?*

T. They do ; but the doctrine, St. Paul says, is devilish, that forbids to marry.

Y. *But has not St. Paul said, it was good for single persons so to abide ?*

T. He has ; but he spoke this not by commandment, but out of compassion to them, who were under a severe persecution : and it is no general rule ; because marriage is honourable in all orders of men.

SECT. IV. *On the imagination ; it's objects and operations.*

Y. **I** Thank you for these instructions, about the desire of the sexes. Is there any thing else in my make that belongs to the government of reason ?

T. There is.

Y. Pray what is it ?

T. It is the imagination.

Y. What is that ?

T. It is that power of the soul, by which it formeth images of things ; which it does thro' means of impressions made on the brain, by sensation.

Y. Be pleased to make this plain to me.

T. In your sleep, when you have dreams, they are of this sort ; which when you awake and consider them as only the workings of the imagination, you regard them but as dreams.

Y. Does the imagination work whilst I am waking ?

T. Yes ; and very usefully, when it is well watched and examined : for it gives the thought it's impression on the mind ; and is, as it were, the writing or imprinting of it there.

Y. It is then of great use ?

T. It is ; but then it may give wrong characters or marks of things, and so be very hurtful.

Y. When may I know it to be hurtful ?

T. When it paints objects in false colours, or in too strong ones.

Y. When does it paint objects in false colours ?

T. When it represents any wicked action as lovely ! or when it represents virtue or religion as a gloomy, uncomfortable thing !

Y.

Y. *In what instance does the imagination paint things in too strong colours?*

T. When it represents any perishing good as greater than it really is; or any present evil as greater.

Y. *Pray instance more particularly in things, about which, the imagination is faulty?*

T. When you imagine riches, and honour, or pleasure, a most worthy end of your pursuit.

Y. *When will my imagination of riches become erroneous?*

T. When you reckon them necessary to your happiness; or when you imagine that a man's life does consist in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Y. *Do not riches make a man more happy?*

T. Never, when a man's heart is set upon them. And the covetous man is one of the most miserable of men.

Y. *But may I not endeavour to improve my fortune?*

T. You may and ought; but you must not do it by any unjust methods, either of fraud or oppression. And your aim must be your becoming more useful to the needy and distressed; and to other services of society.

Y. *May I not seek the applause of others?*

T. You may; but you must not imagine that either your beauty, your fine dress, your wit, or your fortune give you a just title.

Y. *What then?*

T. Nothing short of your virtue, or behaving well, can give you a just title to the esteem of men.

Y. *When will my imagination paint pleasure in too strong colours, or in a false light?*

T. When your love to pleasure hinders you from employing yourself for your own good, or
the

the good of others : or when your amusements are of that nature, as to indispose you for the great business of life.

Y. *If I understand you, the covetous, the proud, and the men of pleasure, are men who live under the guidance of imagination, and not of reason ?*

T. They do so live ; and in the language of holy Scripture, they are dead whilst they live.

Y. *How are they dead ?*

T. As the principles they live upon are deadly.

Y. *But do they not think that they enjoy life, as much as any others do ?*

T. Doubtless, they may so think ; but it is all imaginary, and not real enjoyment.

Y. *I perceive that my imagination will require a great deal of care, in order to keep it regular and useful.*

T. It will ; but your pains will be rewarded in it's unspeakable use and service.

Y. *Upon what objects may I most safely indulge it ?*

T. Upon the inexpressible advantages that will attend your virtue, and the disadvantages that will attend your being vicious !

Y. *Will there be no danger of excess here ?*

T. No ; for it seems to be a faculty of the human soul, given by our maker for this end.

Y. *Do all these things belong to the knowledge of God's will, and the doing of it ? for I am fond of the thought of becoming a child of God ?*

T. They do ; for they are your very capacity of becoming free, pious and virtuous.

SECT. V. *On religious character; how attainable.*

Y. **M**AY I hope, by this self-government, to resemble God?

T. Yes; in his moral perfections.

Y. *What do you mean by his moral perfections?*

T. His moral perfections, are, his righteousness, goodness, truth, and faithfulness to his promises. And are distinguished from his other perfections; such as, his eternity, infinity, his knowledge and his power.

Y. *How may I resemble him in his moral perfections?*

T. By using your compass of knowledge and power in seeking you own good and happiness, and in promoting the good and happiness of others. Yet this you cannot do, unless you are free to use your own understanding, and make a judgment for yourself.

Y. *How does this appear?*

T. Very plainly; for you cannot write after the example that your master hath set you, if you do not see it, and attend to it; and are not at liberty to copy after it. If therefore you imitate God, you must know what you imitate in him.

Y. *But may not my parents direct me in my duty to God?*

T. They may, and ought to direct you; and in following their directions you honour them: but then, you are to obey your parents in the Lord.

Y. *What does that mean?*

T. It meaneth, that as you are able to form a judgment for yourself, you must be satisfied that
their

their instructions are agreeable to the mind and will of God.

Y. Will it be my duty to reject their instructions, if I am persuaded they are not agreeable to God's will ?

T. You ought to reject them. And in doing so, you do no more than your parents have done, if they are religious : for they are no farther religious than they have used their own understandings.

Y. What then, must I reject all my education-principles, in order to my becoming religious ?

T. I do not say that ; but you must be satisfied that they are right, before you make them your own. And they will require very close examination.

Y. Will it not reflect dishonour on my parents, if I should happen to differ from them ?

T. It can be no dishonour to them to have their child use his own understanding, in the most interesting affair in the world.

Y. Pray shew me the reason of this more fully ?

T. Consider, religion is a personal thing. So that the religion of your parents cannot be your religion : nor must their judgments be your directory ; but the will of God. Though so far as you see their judgments are formed upon, and agreeable to the will of God, you will agree with them.

Y. But if my parents are not to judge for me, in religious matters, must not the minister judge for me, on whose public instructions I attend ?

T. No christian-minister is designed, in the institution of his office, to see for you ; but only to assist you in, and persuade you to the use of your own eyes.

Y. Must I judge for myself, so far as I am religious ?

D

T.

T. You must ; for religion consists in the soul's forming right notions of God, and behaving in a manner agreeable to those notions.

Y. *What are the best helps to my forming right notions of God?*

T. The holy scriptures.

Y. *May I not mistake the sense of them?*

T. If you desire to do God's will, you cannot, in matters that concern your salvation. For *Jesus* has declared; that if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.

Y. *If I am willing to do God's will, shall I then know it?*

T. You shall; for this will suppose that you honestly and diligently read and study the holy scriptures; and they are able to make you wise unto salvation.

Y. *What do you call the holy scriptures?*

T. The books of the Old and New Testament.

Y. *Why do you call them holy scriptures?*

T. Because they were written by men inspired, or taught by the holy spirit of God.

Y. *How may I know that?*

T. You may know it by their revealing such things of God's creation, providence, kingdom, and government, that all the men in the world could not have found out, unless God had revealed such things to them.

Y. *What are those things?*

T. These are some; the origin of the world, and order of the creation. The entrance of sin and death. The prophecies of future events; together with the time and manner of their accomplishment. —Man's power over the life of brutes.—The restoring of all men to life by *Jesus Christ*.—And the judgment of the world by him: when every man shall

shall be rewarded according to the things done in his body.

Y. *Is there any other proof of the scriptures being a divine revelation?*

T. There is; namely, the perfect harmony of precepts, examples, and principles with the particular doctrines which they teach, concerning God, and his government.

Y. *Could not learned men have found out such a scheme as that of the New Testament, without a divine inspiration?*

T. No; for its doctrines, when justly compared with those of the most learned of all ages, shew theirs to be foolishness.

Y. *Wherein does the excellency of the New Testament appear?*

T. It appears, in that the most heavenly and spiritual doctrines and principles of the gospel, were not only beyond the reach of human capacity, but they explain the Old Testament writings,—correct all human schemes: and are delivered with plainness and simplicity, and with an authority that shews they were not the produce of human study or invention.

Y. *You said, they are able to make me wise unto salvation?*

T. I did.

Y. *How will they do this?*

T. As they will teach you not only how to behave well in every relation in which you stand to God, and your fellow-creatures; but they will reconcile you to all the allotments of providence; and enable you to possess your soul in patience.

Y. *Is this the making me wise unto salvation?*

T. It is; for salvation signifies a deliverance from sin and death.

Y. *What is sin?*

T.

T. It is a transgression of the law of God ; in other words, it is a desiring, or doing what you know, or might know, is contrary to his will.

Y. *How can the scriptures deliver me from sin?*

T. By teaching you to keep God's commandments.

Y. *But what if I transgress, through temptation?*

T. They teach you to seek the mercy of God, by repentance.

Y. *What meaneth repentance?*

T. It meaneth a sorrow for sin, attended with a thorough reformation, a ceasing from doing evil, and a learning to do well. A repentance never to be repented of.

Y. *How may I expect a deliverance from death?*

T. You may expect that if you are truly religious, you shall not die the death of a sinner ; but tho' you die, you shall live.

Y. *How is that?*

T. God in his great mercy has appointed *Jesus Christ* to be the resurrection and the life : so that if you are one of God's children, he will raise you up from the dead, and confer on you eternal life, which is the gift of God.

Y. *May I hope for this?*

T. You may ; for the grace or favour of God bringeth salvation to all men, by teaching them to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts ; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world : and all such may look for that blessed hope.

Y. *This is a great encouragement to be religious?*

T. It is ; and I hope you will give diligence in working out your own salvation.

Y. *I desire so to improve the favour of God.*

F I N I S.