

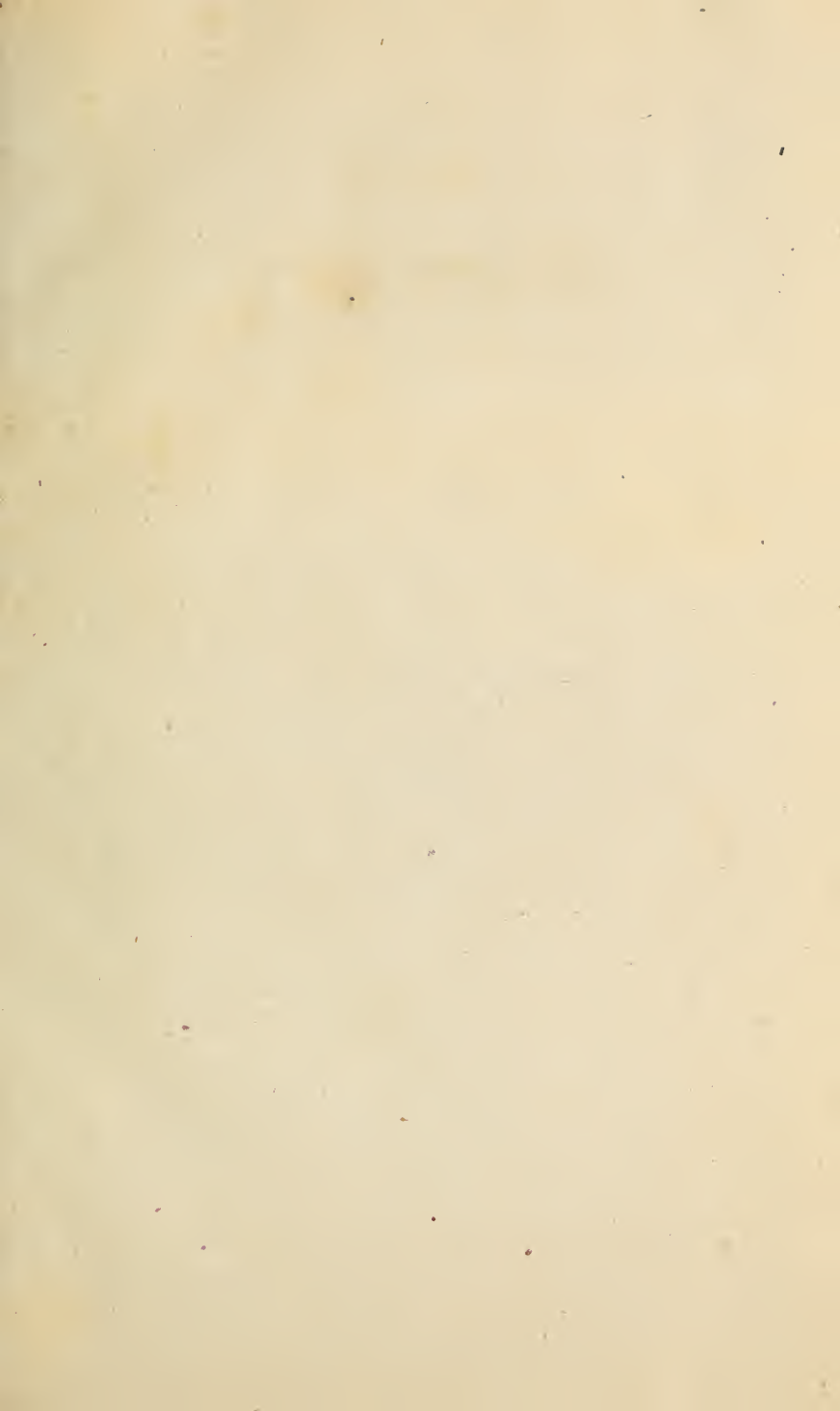
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A
S E R M O N,

ON THE DEATH OF

J O H N H O W A R D, Esq.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

A

S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY THE DECEASE OF

J O H N H O W A R D, Esq.

PREACHED IN

LITTLE WILD-STREET,

NEAR

LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS,

MARCH 21, 1790.

By SAMUEL STENNETT, D.D.

L O N D O N :

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M.DCC.XC.

TO THE
CHURCH AND CONGREGATION
ASSEMBLING IN LITTLE WILD-STREET,
NEAR LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS,
THE FOLLOWING SERMON,
PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS,
WITH GREAT RESPECT,
INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE
AND OBLIGED
HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

MUSWELL-HILL,
April 5, 1790.

A

S E R M O N, &c.

ACTS x. 38.

—WHO WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD—

IT is a sad providence that directs my attention to these words—words so descriptive of the character to which I mean to accommodate them, that the name of HOWARD scarce need be mentioned to inform you whom I intend. To raise a monument to his memory is not my object. It does not require it, nor am I equal to the service. The obligations however I owe to *his* friendship and *your* edification, will not allow me to be silent. His benevolent regards to this Christian Society; his regular attendance with us for

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many

many years past, as opportunity permitted; the satisfaction he expressed in the word here preached; and the particular share I had in his affectionate esteem, are all considerations which will I hope secure me from the imputation of vanity, in thus taking notice of so public a character.

The words of our text were spoken by the Apostle *Peter* to *Cornelius*, of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. “God anointed him with
“the Holy Ghost, and with power, so that
“he went about doing good, and healing all
“that were oppressed of the Devil: for God
“was with him.” The two particulars I mean to illustrate and improve, are,

I. His Business, which was “doing good;”
and

II. The Diligence with which he pursued it—“He went about” doing good.

I. His Business. It was “doing good.”

He was a “Benefactor” to mankind. A title assumed by one of the Egyptian Kings, how justly I will not enquire. But whatever good offices

offices a *Ptolemy Euergetes* might perform, his character is not to be mentioned at the same time with that of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is indeed JESUS THE BENEFACITOR. Not to speak here of the grand object of his appearance in our world, the offering his life a sacrifice of sin : how benevolently was he employed during his pilgrimage on earth ! “ He went about doing good ”—good, both to the *Souls* and the *Bodies* of men. To the latter indeed our text principally refers. And though it instances only one species of good he did, that of “ healing them who were oppressed of the Devil ;” yet the phrase itself comprehends all possible ways of being beneficial to mankind. And the instance here mentioned plainly intimates, as some have observed, that he who took such pains to rescue the bodies of men from the power and possession of the devil, would not suffer their souls to remain under his dominion. He “ did good ” then both to their *Souls* and their *Bodies*.

FIRST, To their *Souls*.

This he did by his public preaching, and his private instructions. He set himself to oppose the passions of depraved nature, and

the prejudices arising from the ignorance and superstition of the times. He laid the axe to the root of the tree, and resolutely combated the absurd and dangerous principles of the Scribes and Pharisees, who sat in Moses's seat, and lorded it over the consciences of men. He shewed the fallacy of their reasonings, and the evil tendency of their doctrines. And knowing the secrets of their hearts, he warned men to beware of their hypocrisy, affirming that they were "blind leaders of the blind *." And while he thus attacked the prevailing errors of the times, which had confirmed men in ignorance and sin, he failed not to give them just apprehensions of God, his *Law*, the *Soul*, the *Way of life and salvation*, *Religion*, and a *Future state*.

The character of the blessed God he placed in its true light, by ascribing to him the perfections of wisdom, justice, holiness, goodness, and truth; and by drawing out the lively expressions thereof in his own pure and perfect example.

The divine *Law* he rescued from those false glosses and absurd interpretations, which had been imposed upon it by wicked and designing

* Matt. xv. 14.

men ; giving its true and genuine sense, and explaining its spirituality, extent, and authority.

The *Soul* he affirmed to be immortal : and whilst he asserted its dignity, importance, and amenableness at the divine tribunal, gave a striking picture of the sad state to which it is reduced by sin ; laying open the ignorance, pride, passion, and iniquity of the human heart, and insisting on the necessity of a moral change, or of the “ New-birth *,”

All haughty pretences to merit he treated with sovereign contempt, teaching men that HE alone was “ the Mediator between God and them †,” that “ none could come to God with acceptance but by him ‡,” and that “ they only who believed on him, the Saviour of the World, should have life through him §.”

The nature of *Personal Religion* he explained, and the obligations of Christians to it he enforced by the noblest motives. The blessings of a peaceful conscience, and the pleasures resulting from a hope of the divine favour, he set in the most engaging light. And while he recommended the virtues of humility, faith, and benevolence, with their genuine fruits, he

* John iii. 3. † 1 Tim. ii. 5. ‡ John xiv. 6. § John iii. 36.

pointed to the Blessed Spirit as the Author of these heavenly gifts, and directed his followers to look for them as the effect of his influence.

To crown all, he gave the most pleasing and animated descriptions of the felicity and glory of heaven, and the strongest assurances of its certainty and everlasting duration.—Such was the doctrine our Saviour taught, ever accompanied with the clearest reasoning, the most forcible arguments, and the warmest persuasions.

It is also observable of his instructions, that they were so conducted as to the season, manner, and other circumstances of them, as best to attain the end he had always in view of “doing good.” He taught both publicly and privately, at home and abroad, in the temple and the synagogues, in the city and the desert. He took occasion from the common occurrences of life to engage the attention of men to the great truths of religion, and to fix a deep impression of their importance upon their hearts. He addressed himself to the different characters, passions, and conditions of his hearers. The ignorant he taught with gentleness and forbearance, pity-
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ing their prejudices, and condescending to their weaknesses. The distressed he comforted, like a compassionate physician, healing the broken hearted, and pouring oil and wine into the wounds of the bleeding conscience. The proud and self-confident opposer he reproved with seasonable freedom, and just severity. Nor would the peculiar affection he bare to his own disciples, suffer him to soothe their irregular passions, or palliate their criminal mistakes. As occasion was, he reprehended or he pitied them, he exhorted or he comforted them, he censured or he applauded them. And his instructions he cloathed with such language, figures, and parables; and uttered them with such a voice and gesture, as were best adapted to convey them with clearness and energy to the mind and conscience.—Thus did our divine Saviour, in every possible way, serve the interests of the immortal souls of men. Which leads me to speak,

SECONDLY, Of his “doing good” to their *Bodies*.

Their temporal interests, every species of which I include in this phrase, were an object

he did not deem unworthy of his attention. As he was not himself a stranger to poverty and affliction, so neither was he insensible of the miseries of others. So far from it, that he is said to have “borne their griefs and carried their sorrows *;” and “he came not to be ministered to, but to minister †.”

How much he was concerned for the civil interests of his native country, appears from the tears he shed over Jerusalem, while he looked forward to the dreadful calamities that were coming upon it. The offices too of private friendship he performed with the greatest cheerfulness, as is evident from the provident care he took of his disciples, whom he considered as his family, and the affectionate farewell he gave them at last. And of the good he did to individuals of every rank and condition where he came, the instances are innumerable.

He was himself poor, and so had little of this world's good to distribute to the needy. Yet what he had he freely communicated to

* Isa. liii. 4.

† Matt. xx. 28,

them ;

them; and the widow, the orphan, and the stranger all shared of his bounty. Having no other way to provide for a large multitude that followed him into the wilderness, and were almost spent with hunger, he miraculously multiplied a few small loaves and fishes, and so kindly supplied the cravings of animal nature *. The sick he healed. The cries of tender parents for their children, of masters for their servants, of the humane for their afflicted friends and neighbours, he heard and answered. He gave eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and feet to the lame. The hungry he fed, and the naked he clothed. Little children received his benediction, and “the blessing of thousands that were ready to perish came upon him †.” By his presence, houses hung round with sorrow and mourning, were made cheerful and happy. The widow of Nain, through his tender compassion, had her only son restored to life, and given back to her embraces ‡; and *Martha* and *Mary* their beloved brother *Lazarus* §.

* John vi. 5—14. † Job xxix. 13. ‡ Luke vii. 11—17.
§ John xi. 1—46.

In short, every place he visited had some monument of gratitude to raise to his liberality. And his disciples long after, well remembered what he was used to say, with heart-felt pleasure and delight, “ It is better to give than receive *.” The favorite maxim this by which he governed his life, and which he found means to practise amidst all the poverty and misery he endured.—Thus have we taken a general view of “ the good he did both to the *Bodies* and *Souls* of men.”—And now let us see,

II. With what attention and diligence he performed this the great business of his life.—“ He went about” doing good.

Such was his constant, unwearied, and most delightful employment. He considered it as his proper work, just as men do the following their several trades and occupations of life.—So he calls it “ his Father’s business.” “ Wot ye not that I was about my Father’s business†?”—And “ the work which was given him to do‡.” To do the will of God was “ his meat and drink§;” as natural to him,

* Acts xx. 31.

† Luke ii. 49.

‡ John xvii. 4.

§ John iv. 34.

as it is to men in common to gratify their senses. And that it was thus his object will appear, if you consider these three things, manifestly included in the expression of “going about” to do good,—the *Wide Extent* of his labors — the *Pains* which of necessity must attend his work—and his *Perseverance* therein.

FIRST, As to the *Wide Extent* of his labors.

He did not move in a narrow sphere. His aim of doing good was not confined to his own proper family, to his neighbourhood, to the town where he lived, or to the villages round about it, no nor to Judæa itself. It was not confined to his immediate disciples, or to his own party, as they were perhaps called; no nor to the Jews themselves. He did good to all sorts of men, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, persons of every description. “He went about” doing good. He did not stay at home, and receive all that came to him, as Paul was obliged to do at Rome, in his own hired house. But he went abroad, went wheresoever he was sent for, or where
there

there was any prospect of doing good. Sometimes he is seen in the city, and sometimes in the wilderness; sometimes in the towns and villages, and sometimes in the fields and by the way-side: now in Galilee, then in Judæa.

SECONDLY. The *Pains and Fatigues* too attending his work were very great.

His constitution was probably as tender, and as susceptible of languor and weariness as that of the most delicate. This however was no temptation to him to sloth and indulgence. Urged by a vehement desire of doing good, he is forgetful of himself, and indifferent to those precautions which would be generally thought prudent. Hunger, thirst, and cold, he willingly suffers to accomplish his designs. Hazardous and fatiguing journeys he takes to compass the ends of his ministry. Sometimes we see him sitting on the side of a well, and asking a little water to quench his thirst*. And again, entering a village where the inhospitable inhabitants refuse him any entertainment. “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of man

* John iv. 6, 7.

hath not where to lay his head *,” yet none of these things discourage him.

Nor does his love of solitude, which must have been peculiarly grateful to him who had in himself such sources of divine entertainment, divert him from his grand object. If he may but do good he is content to live in a croud. Nor is he discouraged by the opposition he meets with. Nothing is so great a trial to a good man, as to be traduced for a designing hypocrite, and represented as aiming at popularity, or something worse. So our Lord was treated. Yet this cruel treatment does not provoke him to desist from his attempts to do good; no nor the base ingratitude of many who received favours at his indulgent hands.—Once more,

THIRDLY. The phrase intimates his *Constancy and Perseverance* in this his delightful employment.

He did not in one or two instances only do good. He did not upon a few occasions only exert himself for the good of his family, his

* Matt. viii. 20.

neighbourhood, his friends, or his country. It was not in his early days only that he was thus employed, or when incited to duty by some fair opportunity that offered. To do good was the business of his whole life. At twelve years of age he was doing good in the temple *, and the very last day of his life he was employed in the same work. His zeal never abated, nor did his business suffer any the least intermission. “ I have finished the work,” says he when he came to die, “ which thou gavest me to do †.”

Thus have you the out-lines of our Saviour's most perfect and amiable character—a character which never was or can be equalled. “ He went about doing good,” and acquitted himself with entire satisfaction to his divine Father, and the requisitions of his holy law.

Let us now consider the Instruction which this pleasing subject affords.

FIRST. This view of our Saviour's character should excite in our breasts the warmest

* Luke ii. 96.

† John xvii. 4.

love to him, and the firmest *confidence* in him.

Can we have so fair a pattern before our eyes without being enamoured with it? especially when we reflect that to this zeal and diligence of his we owe our hope of everlasting life. It was not only in obedience to his Father's commands, but to gratify his own ardent desires for our welfare, as well as that of his immediate disciples, that he thus went about doing good. From his toils and labours we derive blessings of infinite value. He has by these means laid open to our view the immeasurable grace and compassion of his heart; given us the most striking idea of the divine character; provided effectually for our forgiveness, acceptance, and salvation; and set us an example the most engaging—the most animating. Behold the Son of God thus “going about doing good,” thus providing for the happiness of myriads of rational creatures, and securing to them joys the most refined and that know no end. And then say, Whether he is not worthy of our highest love and most cheerful obedience.—Nor can there remain
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the least ground to suspect either his “*ability*, or his *willingness*, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him *;” after his having given such proofs of the perfection of his character, and the benevolence of his heart.

SECONDLY. In this mirror of our Saviour’s example we have a clear and humbling view of our own defects. His pattern justly upbraids the sin and folly of all. “He went about doing good.”

But ah ! how many are there, on the contrary, who go about doing evil? like their father the devil, “who, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour †.”—Doing evil to God, trampling under foot his righteous law, and casting contempt upon the gracious proposals of his gospel. Doing evil to their fellow-creatures, to their reputation, substance, and persons. And doing evil to themselves, laying violent hands on their immortal souls, “making a mock at sin ‡,” and “casting about

* Heb. vii. 25. † 1 Pet. v. 8. ‡ Prov. xiv. 9.

fire-brands, arrows, and death, saying they are in sport *.”—And not only do evil, but “go about” to do evil; consider it their business, “make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof †;” and “not only do these things,” but, as the apostle expresses it, “have pleasure in those that do them ‡.” How deplorable these characters!

Others there are who think it enough if they abstain from gross sins, and doing no one any harm, take it for granted they may be excused doing any good. But such men, while sheltering themselves under the fond notion of innocence, act in direct opposition to their own reason; since the same law that requires them to abstain from vice, requires them also to do good. To men of this character I would say,—Behold, I beseech you, in the mirror of the Saviour’s life, ^{1. sic} your own lamentable defects; and so be convinced of the necessity, on the one hand, of that provision he has made for the pardon and acceptance of the penitent sinner; and on the other, of new views, dispositions, and

* Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. † Rom. xiii. 14. ‡ Rom. i. 32.

affections to constitute you his disciples, and engage you to the imitation of his example.

Others indeed are sensible, in a degree at least, of their obligations not only to preserve sober characters, but also to do good: yet, alas! while faintly attempting it, they confidently build their hopes on their supposed merit. They go about, or rather seem to go about, doing good, and therefore think they have a claim to the rewards of heaven, on the ground of strict equity. But let such men compare their works with those of Christ, and they will see such deficiencies in them, as must, unless extravagant stupidity prevent, strike them dumb in the presence of a Being who is omniscient and all-perfect.—Again,

Another deception, no less fatal, is that of those who, wholly taken up with speculations in religion, and furiously zealous in their contention for the faith; are perfectly indifferent to the great business of imitating the example of Christ. But what evidence does that man give of the genuineness of his faith, who acts as if he thought his zeal was to excuse him from offices of love and obedience; and as if, because

he served the king in his wars, as some one expresses it, he is to be exempted from taxes? A due consideration of the life of Christ, every where proposed for our imitation, would make such persons ashamed of their pretensions to religion.—Once more,

While we thus behold our divine Master ever employed in doing good, the very best of us stand reproved for our many failures in duty. Alas! how little good have we done! how little for the glory of God! the honour of Christ! and the real welfare of our fellow-creatures! Let us therefore be deeply humbled at the feet of divine Mercy, look by faith to the cross of Christ, and shed penitential tears there for our ingratitude and dissingenuity. And let us,

THIRDLY. Be persuaded to the imitation of his most excellent example.

To do good is the noblest employment we can be engaged in: nor is there a Christian living who has it not in his power to do good. If then we have abilities, though but in the smallest degree, for instructing others, let us cheerfully use them to that end. “ Let him that hath

the gift of teaching, wait on teaching ; or of exhorting, on exhortation*.” Be our stations in life what they may, whether public or private, let us cherish in our bosoms the amiable graces of humility, meekness, contentment, and benevolence; and by the genuine expressions of those graces in our lives, allure others to the imitation of our example, and so do them good. Particularly by acts of charity, if blessed with wealth, let us diffuse happiness among the poor, and animate those of the same rank with ourselves to the like kind offices. Let us feed the hungry, cloath the naked, visit the sick, and take under our patronage the oppressed and the friendless, the widow and the orphan. And to our endeavours for the good of others, let us add our fervent prayers to God for his blessing. Thus let us become the friends and benefactors of mankind.

To animate us to our duty, let it be remembered, that while we are doing good, we are imitating the example of the blessed God. “ He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works †.” O how various,

* Rom. xii. 7, 8.

† Psal. cxlv. 9.

how numerous, how prodigious are the expressions of his bounty! And how great must the honour be to resemble him, the best of all Beings! “Be ye therefore followers of God, brethren, as dear children *.”

By doing good we imitate the example of Christ. And when to the dignity of his character, we add the obligations we owe to his friendship in dying for us, how powerful, how irresistible is the motive to do as he did! O think, Christian, on the one hand, of the immense value of your soul, the miseries to which your guilt had exposed you, and the glory to which you stand entitled in heaven; and think, on the other, of the painful services your divine Saviour performed, and the bitter sufferings he endured, to redeem you from death and hell, and to make you the heir of immortal bliss: think of all this, and then say, Whether you are not bound by every possible obligation to imitate the example of such a Friend?

There is also the highest pleasure, to a renewed mind, in this God-like employ-

* Ephes. v. 1.

ment of doing good. Is he a happy man whose only object is, to guard against temporal evils and to gratify his animal appetites? O! no. Rightly instructed in our relation to God and one another, the noblest sensations we can possibly feel, are those which arise from a persuasion of his favour, and the recollection of having contributed to the happiness of our fellow-creatures. How earnestly did the apostle exhort the Ephesians to remember the words of Christ! “how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive *.”

Let me add the animating consideration of the infinitely glorious rewards of a future state. Yes, Christian, the blessed Jesus, who himself went about doing good, will not fail, on the great day of account, to acknowledge your services performed in obedience to his commands, and from a grateful sense of your obligations to his grace. With what unutterable joy will you hear him say, in the presence of angels and men! “I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

* Acts xx. 35.

naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me *.” “ Well done, good and faithful servant ! enter thou into the joy of the Lord †.”

But there is one further consideration to animate us to our duty, and that is, the example of men eminent for their benevolence and piety. Such an example I have now to hold up to your view. A pattern which is not, indeed, to be copied, in many particulars of it, as few have ability and opportunity for the exertions of so distinguished a character. The consideration of it may, however, have a happy effect to engage us, in our little circles, to put out all our strength in the service of God and our fellow-creatures.

Permit me then to give you some general account of this extraordinary man, and then relate a few historical facts concerning him, which will establish what has been said of his character, and make impressions on our minds suited to the present occasion.

* Matth. xxv. 35—39.

† Matth. xxv. 21.

I shall not take up your time with the particulars of his birth, education, and fortune. The advantages of this kind with which Providence indulged him, and of which he was truly sensible, were, of trifling consideration, when brought into view with those personal endowments, natural and religious, by which he was distinguished from most other characters.

He possessed a clear understanding and a sound judgment, which were enriched and improved by a variety of useful knowledge. And as he had a taste for polite literature, so he was well versed in most of the modern languages, which he took no small pains to acquire, that he might be the better enabled to carry his benevolent purposes into effect. He had a just idea of the civil and religious rights of mankind, accompanied with a true sense of the worth, importance, and dignity of man as a reasonable, social, and immortal creature. And as no man had a more extensive knowledge of the world than he, having conversed with personages of the first rank in life, and with those in the meanest stations; with characters eminent for virtue and piety, and
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the most abandoned and wretched ; so no man was more fully persuaded than he of the universal depravity of human nature. With the discernment both of a Philosopher and a Christian he entered into the principles, maxims, and views of men of all ranks and conditions of life ; and knew how to apply the knowledge he thus acquired to the most important purposes.

His moral endowments were perhaps more extraordinary than those just mentioned. Here he shone with distinguished lustre. The two virtues of *Fortitude* and *Humanity* were the prominent features in his countenance. Nor could his modesty conceal them from the public eye, no not from the view of all Europe. They were interwoven with his nature, and always acted in unison with each other.

Such was the *Firmness of his Mind* that no danger could deter him from his duty—not the painful fatigues of long and hazardous journies—not the perils of seas infested with merciless barbarians—not the loathsome infection of dungeons—not the dread of assassination by the hands of miscreants, who draw
their

their gains from the vitals of those committed to their custody—nor the apprehension of the plague in a ship with a foul bill, and in the confinement of a Lazaretto—no danger however formidable could shake his resolution. “ Having made up his mind to his duty,” as he told me when expressing my apprehensions for his safety, “ he thrust all consequences “ from his view, and was resolved to follow “ wherever Providence led.” And in a letter I received from him, when just embarking on a dangerous ocean, with the prospect before him of performing a forty-two days quarantine, he thus expresses himself, “ *I bless God, “ my calm spirits and steady resolution have not “ yet forsaken me.*”

He was superior too to the frowns and the contempt of the envious and the avaricious, who represented him as petulantly officious, or extravagantly insane. Disappointments he *did* meet with, and obstructions *were* thrown in the way of some of his benevolent plans. But none of these things moved him. And more than one instance I might mention of his asserting the cause of the oppressed, in the face of a kind of opposition which would make most men tremble.—Nor on the other hand, could
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the Siren-song of ease, indulgence, and pleasure, prevail on him when on the career of duty and danger, in the least to relax his painful exertions.

“ Firm to the mast with chains himself he bound,
 “ Nor trusted virtue to th’ enchanting sound.”

With this Roman fortitude was united uncommon *Humanity*. He felt for the miseries of mankind in general. He felt for the miseries of the oppressed. Yea, he felt for the miseries of the guilty, for he well remembered that we are all guilty before God. Their distresses existed not in his imagination only, they were realized to his eye, his ear, his touch. As the Poet expresses it, when speaking of him,

“ He quitted bliss that rural scenes bestow,
 “ To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe,
 “ To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home
 “ Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
 “ But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
 “ And only sympathy like his cou’d reach.”

The number of prisons he visited, at the hazard of his health and life, it would be difficult to collect. Nor did he stop at the iron-gate of the most gloomy dungeon. He entered those dreary mansions of silence and darkness, and, in some instances, of cruel oppression ;

oppression ; poured tears of commiseration on the wretched inhabitant ; and with his own hand ministered assistance, while his heart was meditating plans of more general and effectual relief. “ *The impressions, says he, which these scenes of misery made on my mind, no length of time can efface.*” It may therefore easily be imagined that, with a sensibility peculiar to himself, he affixed that expressive motto to his Book,

“ Ah ! little think the gay———

“ Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround,

“ How many pine in want and dungeon-glooms ;

“ Shut from the common air.” THOMSON.

Here I might paint, but I shall rather leave it to you to imagine, the extatic joy which many groaning under oppression felt, at starting into life and happiness, through the interposition of this their generous Patron ; and the gratitude too, which even those who justly suffered imprisonment felt, for the alleviation of their miseries by his kind offices.

His *Disinterestedness* also in these exertions for the good of mankind, is deserving of our particular notice. For besides the consideration of the fatigues he endured, the dangers to which he exposed his person, and the ex-

pence

pence of various kinds he incurred, he well knew the reports he made to the public would afford disgust rather than entertainment, and so be read and regarded by few. He writ therefore not for the amusement of the curious, and could expect no applause from the unfeeling. Indeed his object was the information of Legislature, of whom he fought, and from whom, to his great satisfaction, he obtained the redress of many evils he complained of. “ *As nothing, says he, but a consciousness of duty could have enabled me to go through all the disagreeable scenes which lay in my way, so I had the happiness of being placed out of the reach of other incitements.*”

There is one more trait in his character which must not be overlooked, and that is his *Temperance*. Such a mastery he obtained over himself that a little food, and that chiefly of the vegetable kind, satisfied the demands of nature ; and with one night's rest out of three he could, for a long course of time, pursue his journies. No consideration could prevail on him to partake of the luxuries of the most elegant table, or to allow himself more rest than was absolutely necessary. Nor yet was he influenced, in this kind of discipline

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he observed, by cynical austerity. He found this mode of living most agreeable to his constitution, and best qualified him for those active exertions which were the pleasure of his life.

Such were the moral endowments of this extraordinary man—such his *Fortitude*, his *Humanity*, his *Disinterestedness*, and *Temperance*.—I go on now to speak of his religious character.

He was a firm believer of divine Revelation. Nor was he ashamed of those truths he heard stated, explained, and enforced in this place. He had made up his mind, as he said, upon his religious sentiments, and was not to be moved from his steadfastness by novel opinions obtruded on the world. Nor did he content himself with a bare profession of these divine truths. He entered into the spirit of the gospel, felt its power, and tasted its sweetness. You know, my friends, with what seriousness and devotion he attended, for a long course of years, on the worship of God among us. It would be scarce decent for me to repeat the affectionate things he says, in a letter writ me from a remote part of the world, respecting the satisfaction and pleasure he had felt in the religious exercises
of

of this place. I shall however be excused, if I just observe, that his hours of religious retirement, whether on land or at sea, were employed in reviewing the notes he had taken of sermons delivered here. And “ *these*, adds
 “ he, *are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*
 “ *Oh, Sir, how many sabbaths have I ardently*
 “ *longed to spend in Wild-street!—God in Christ*
 “ *is my Rock, the portion of my Soul.*”

His Candour, as might naturally be expected in a man of his exemplary piety, was great. As he steadily adhered to his religious principles, so he abhorred bigotry. Having met with difficulties in his enquiries after truth, he knew how to make allowance for those who met with the same.

His acts of Charity to the poor were numerous. For though he was not ostentatious, yet many of them could not be concealed. Providence blessed him with affluence; but all who knew him, know that nothing was more opposite to his disposition than the heaping up wealth. His treasure was laid up in heaven. His neighbourhood in Bedfordshire will bear witness to his generosity; and many a poor family there will, I doubt not,
 feel

feel deeply for the loss of so kind a Friend. Nor were his charities confined to the circle of his own mansion. "He went about," like his divine Master, "doing good." Compassion excited, prudence guided, and obligingness accompanied his benefactions. He well remembered what the benevolent Jesus was used to say when on earth, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Few who sought his assistance were refused, and many obtained it without seeking it. The advancement of the interests of truth and religion, was an object in his view most important. To the erecting of many a place of worship did he liberally contribute. And with what cheerfulness he assisted in the building this House you need not be told. "*He accounted it an honour, he said, to join his name with yours.*"

Good men of every denomination he affectionately loved. And while with a manly firmness he asserted and maintained his own religious sentiments, agreeably to the sense he felt of their importance; he was a good deal hurt at every approach, in his apprehension, towards a little, narrow, contracted spirit in matters of religion. Yet he was a *Dissenter*

from the Established Church on principle. Nor was he ashamed to have it known to all the world that this was his profession. He well understood the grounds of his Dissent, nor could he on any consideration think it his duty to take the sacramental test as a qualification, either for enjoying any place of honour and emolument, or serving any burdensome office in the state. Called upon, however, to the latter, he did not avail himself of this just excuse for declining the service; but resolutely undertook it, at the hazard of incurring enormous pains and penalties, from which nothing but a bill of indemnity could secure him.

Such was the Character of this excellent man. “He went about doing good.” The life of Christ was the original, his the copy. How nearly the latter resembled the former you will judge from what has been said. Nor am I afraid you will charge the account given of him with exaggeration. His character was a very extraordinary one. It was however, not without its imperfections: nor should I do him justice were I to omit adding that he was himself deeply sensible of those imperfections.

It remains that I mention a few historical facts, which will serve to throw a further light upon the character we have drawn, and confirm the truth of what hath been said.

In the year 1773 he was called upon to serve the office of Sheriff for the county of Bedford. The prisons, of course, falling under his inspection and management, he became acquainted with such disorders and abuses, as failed not to excite his compassionate concern. He considered that prisons, houses of correction excepted, were not meant for punishment but confinement. No man is in the eye of the law guilty, till legally tried and convicted. He therefore rightly concluded that to subject a person in this state to any inconvenience, more than the necessary one of confinement, is unjust; and to suffer him, when acquitted, to be loaded with exorbitant fees, is cruel oppression.

The utmost pains therefore he immediately took to effect a reform in the goals under his own custody. This naturally led to the idea, that what had happened in his own County, might have happened also in other Counties.

He

He therefore resolved to visit the prisons of neighbouring Shires. This he did, and his fears being realized by the miserable scenes his eyes beheld, he extended his progress further, and visited the whole kingdom. The information thus obtained, and which was committed accurately to writing, he immediately applied to the object he had in view.

In the year 1774 he was examined upon this subject before the House of Commons, when he had the honour of their thanks. And soon after a Bill was brought in “for the Relief of prisoners who should be acquitted—respecting their fees;” and another Bill “for preserving the health of Prisoners, and preventing the Goal-distemper.” These two Acts which passed that Session, he had printed in a different character, and sent them to the keeper of every County-Goal in England. *By those Acts, as he observes, the tear was wiped from many an eye; and the Legislature had for them “the blessings of many that were ready to perish.”* Thus had a HOWARD the honour of pouring consolation into the afflicted breast; and through him it might be said, “God looked down from the height of his

sanctuary, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that were appointed to death *."

His views, upon this success, were quickly enlarged. He resolved to visit the prisons in foreign countries, not only to obtain relief for the oppressed, and a mitigation of miseries to the distressed wherever he found them; but to procure such new information, as might be necessary to forward the reforms he had in contemplation at home. His visits were repeated, and scarce a kingdom was there in Europe which he did not traverse.

He then extended his views still further, and resolved to collect the rules, orders, and drafts of the principal Lazarettos in Europe, with the medical treatment of patients in the plague; in hopes by these means to set on foot such regulations, and bring forward such measures as, with the blessing of God, might prevent the future return of that calamity to this country. So he travelled into Turkey, and visited himself one, if not more, who was actually in that dreadful disorder, the

* Ps. cii. 18, 19.

distant apprehension of which has made many a countenance turn pale.

To give you only a general account of his well-laid plans, for alleviating the miseries of the poor, for stopping the progress of vice, for promoting industry and virtue, and for preventing the importation and spread of infectious diseases, would carry me too far. I must therefore only add, that success has already, in a degree, attended his endeavours. And it is to be hoped, that such a superstructure will, in time, be raised on the foundation he has laid, as will be of the greatest utility to this country ; and which, should he have access to the knowledge of it in the world above, would, I am persuaded, add to the joy his benevolent heart there feels.

We have hinted before at the painful fatigues he endured, the great expence he incurred, and the imminent dangers to which he exposed himself in thus *going about to do good*: and on this subject I meant further to enlarge, but must deny myself this satisfaction, lest I should trespass on your patience.

The

The attention which was paid to him by the principal Personages in Europe, and which he was so far from courting, that, in some instances, he absolutely declined it; I say, this extraordinary attention of theirs, with the peculiar circumstances that accompanied it, shews in what high estimation his character stood with the Public. Indeed, his modesty must not be passed over without particular notice. His reply to one of the principal officers of state in a great kingdom, upon being told that, however he would not suffer a statue to be erected to him in his own country, a statue would in the prisons of that; I say, his reply was memorable, and marks the character of the man. “ *I have*
“ *no objection, said he, to its being erected where*
“ *it shall be invisible.*” And in a letter he sent me from Turkey, speaking of this *hasty measure*, as he calls it, *and his wish that it might be stopped*, he adds, “ *Alas! our best performances*
“ *have such a mixture of folly and sin, that*
“ *praise is vanity and presumption, and pain to*
“ *a thinking mind.*”

He sat out on his last journey the beginning of July, 1789. It was to have been of great extent, and to have taken up the
com-

compass of about three years. I expostulated largely with him at parting, on the mistake of suffering himself, through an earnest desire of doing good, to be precipitated beyond the clear line of duty, which might possibly be sometimes the case. He seemed to apprehend he should scarce see this country again, and when last in this place, said to a friend near him, “ *Well! we shall not perhaps meet one another again till we meet in heaven.*”

What we feared Providence has permitted. HOWARD is no more! He died at *Cherfon* *, January the 20th, of a malignant fever, which he caught by humanely visiting a person in that disorder; to whom he administered the usual medicine, but without effect. The same medicine he took himself, which proving too powerful for his constitution, the fever carried him off in ten days. He had the assistance of several Physicians; and great attention was paid him by Prince *Potemkin*, who not only sent him his own Physician, but visited him himself.

* A settlement of the Empress of *Russia*, toward the northern extremity of the *Euxine* or *Black Sea*, not far from *Oczakow*.

Thus

Thus fell this great and good man a sacrifice to humanity. The sad news has touched the hearts of thousands. His country weeps. Who feels not on this mournful occasion? It is no weakness to feel—to feel, when friendship and benevolence receive so great a shock from the merciless hand of death.

Submission, however, is our duty. May surviving relatives patiently acquiesce in so very trying a providence! And let us all endeavour to compose our minds to this temper, by turning our attention from the loss *we* sustain to the immense gain *he* has acquired. “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord: they rest from their labours, and their works follow them*.” Yes, he hath ceased from his labours, and is now in the perfect enjoyment of that freedom, health, and happiness he so benevolently wished all mankind to possess:

— his weary soul he bathes
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble rolls
Across his peaceful breast.

* Rev. xiv. 13.

Glory too is his reward. While the angel of mercy wiped the falling tear from his eye, God, the Judge of all, placed a crown of righteoufness on his head. So, with a satisfaction unhurt by the pain he had often felt from the applause of men, he received the plaudit of his divine Master. “ Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord *.” The sentence was heard by the heavenly choir, who instantly, with one voice, echoed back their loud *Amen*.

* Matth. xxv. 23.

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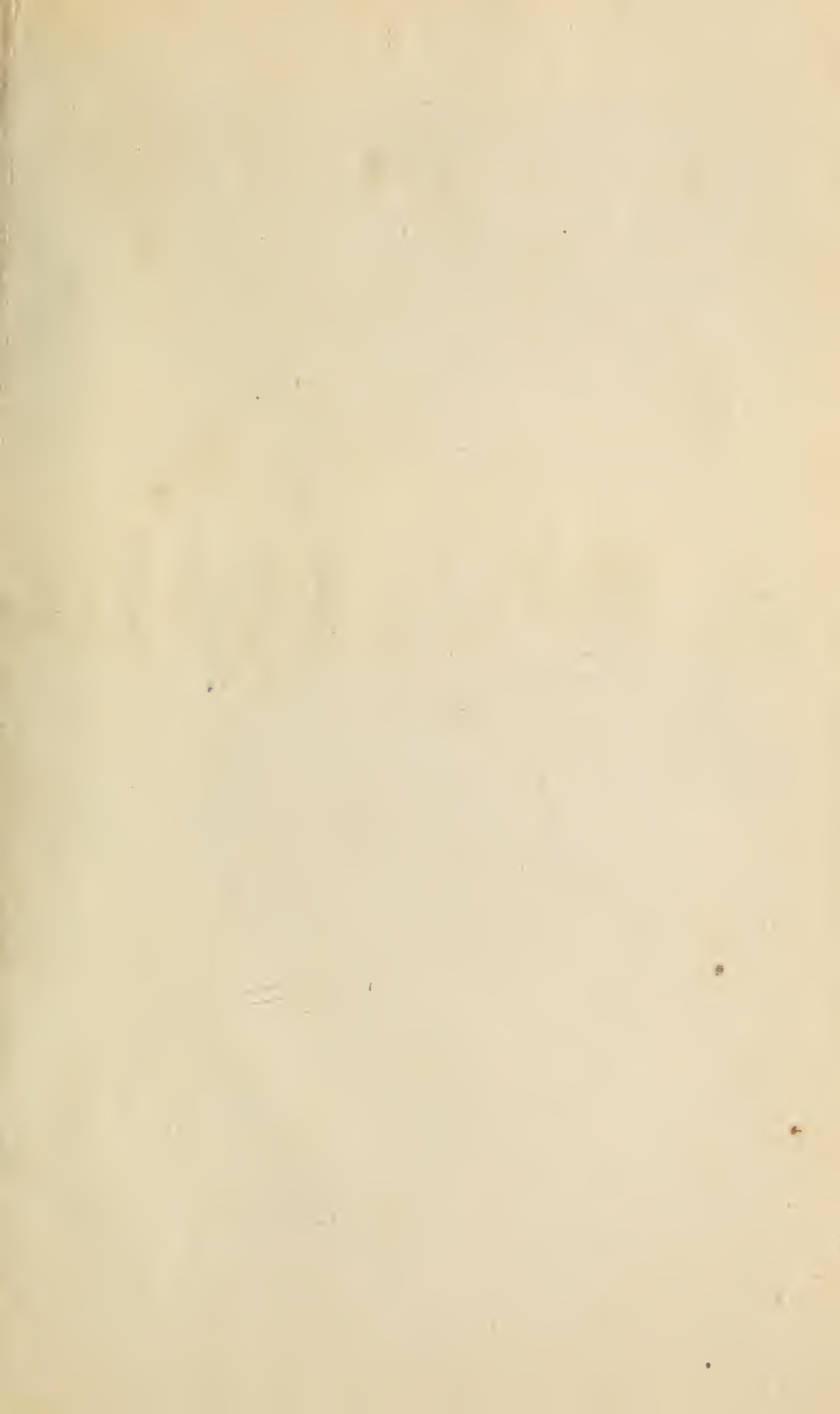
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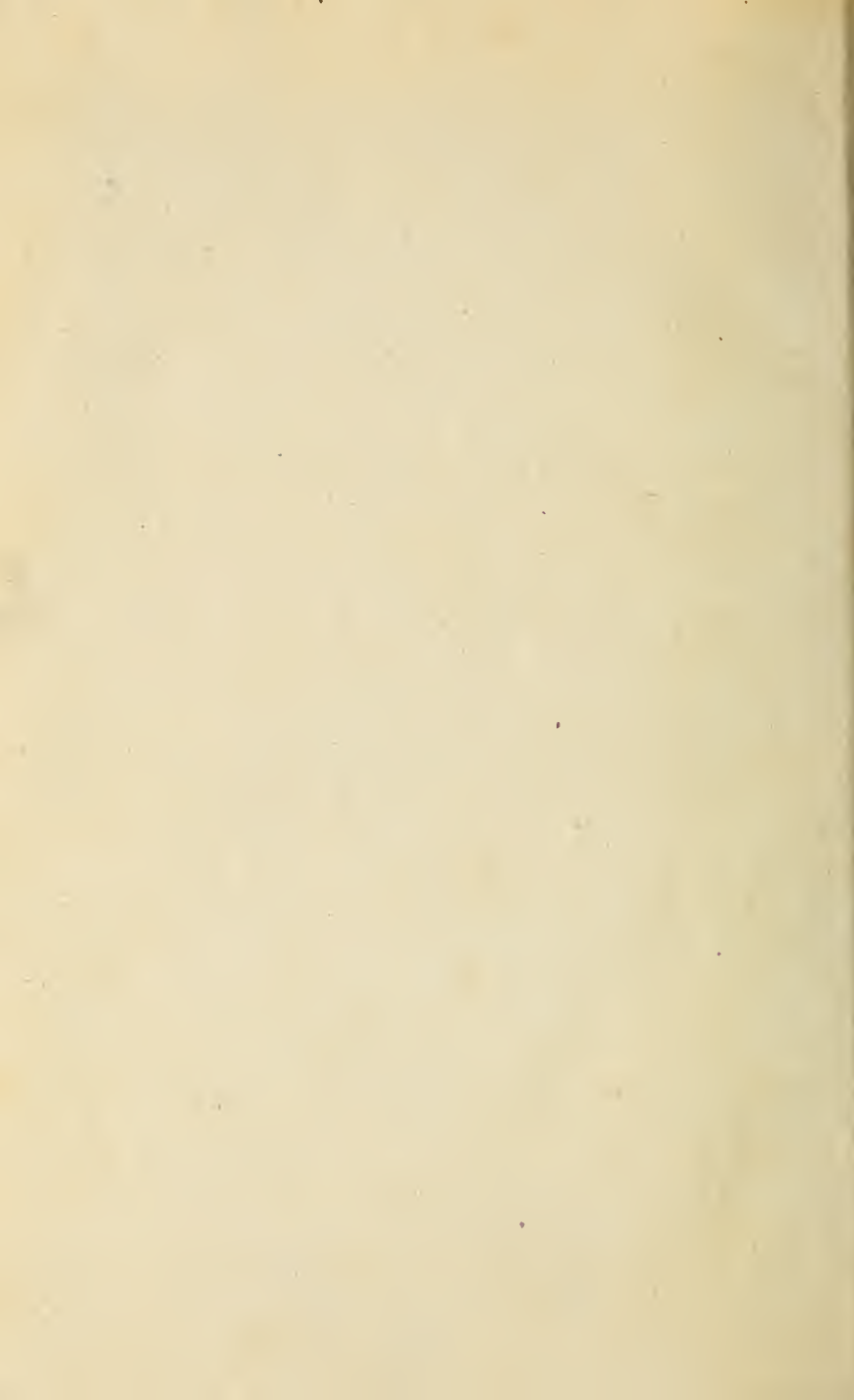
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