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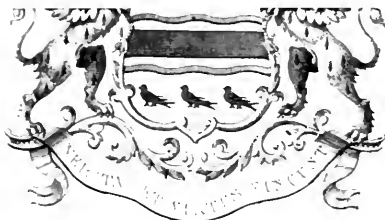


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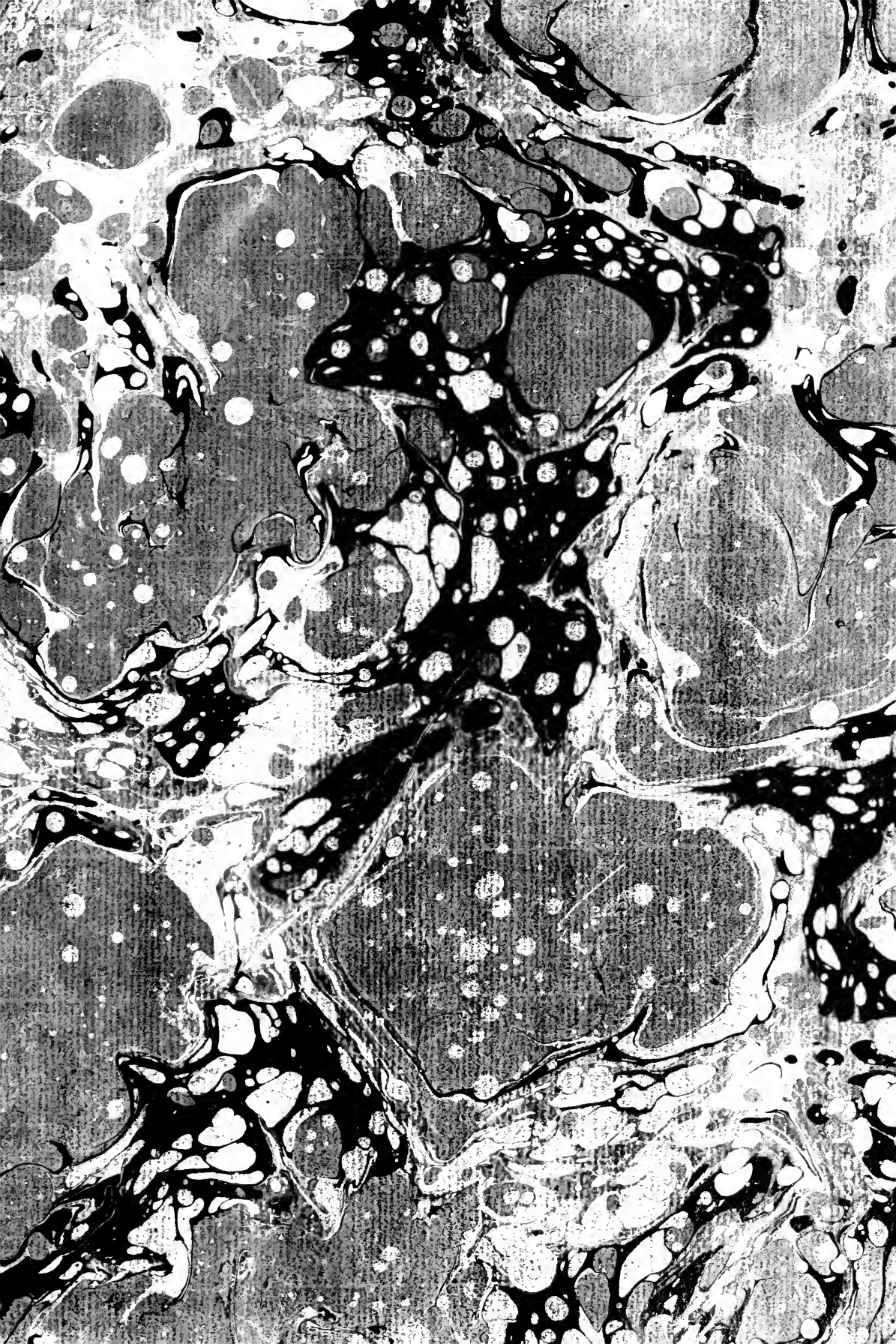
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- P. 15. 2d. Col. 1. 18. for Anthony, r. *Andrew* Guertz.
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- P. 19. 2d. Col. 1. 6. for late Mr. Hardman, r. *Mrs.* Hardman of Rochdale.
- P. 20. 2d. Col. 1. 16. for Jeymsson, r. *Jeynson*.
- P. 21. 1st. Col. 1. last for Mr. Katen Kamp, r. Mr. *Katenkamp*.
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- P. 24. 1st. Col. 1. 14. read John Martin, *jun. Esq;*
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DISCOURSES

O N

SOCIAL VIRTUE.

CHAP. I.

On the social nature, and character, of man.



INTEND, in this chapter, to attempt a distinct and particular explanation of the true ground of all *social* morality—A great and most concerning subject, and proper to be understood, in some measure, by all; because a just discharge of these mutual *social* obligations, which, in every age of the world, have been held and proclaimed as sacred, is absolutely necessary to personal integrity, to the peace and order of families, the strength of civil communities, the dignity, improvement, and welfare of mankind.

IN truth, the particular *relations*, in which men are placed to one another, by the wise all-presiding providence of the supreme Being, should be considered, by each, as his distinct appointed *station* and *post* in human life; the more immediate *sphere* of his

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religious duty and service; the *scene*, on which he is to form his morals, to correct and regulate his temper, to purge his soul of all deformities and turbulencies of passion, and to exhibit and cultivate his virtues, and especially the *mild*, more *gracious*, and *amiable* virtues, that belong to society. And all the relations, that *now* subsist, or can *possibly* take place, under the conduct of truth and right reason, arise from the *social* nature and character of man, and may be resolved into this as their *original* source—Which I have, therefore, strictly following reason, and the natural order of things, proposed to make the subject of my *first* discourse.

THE *entire community* of mankind is, in an allusive sense, justly represented as *one* grand and vast body; in the *plan* of the Creator, of admirable constitution, and most excelling order, and formed for the noblest purposes of reasonable life, intermingling benevolence, moral rectitude and happiness. And from hence it follows, that the relations of *men to men*, and of *each* to the *whole*, must, while the present state of things continues, be indissoluble; their dependence mutual, universal, eternal; their right to all humane and social offices unalienable; their interests strictly united and inseparable. Thus has the almighty source of being, and parent of good, founded, and established, the widely extended community of mankind, to be enlivened, and cherished, by a spirit of benevolence diffused through *all its parts*; and given it a rank, suited to its powers, amongst intelligent and moral orders, the most sublime and glorious of all his works.

WHAT the members of the *natural* body are to each other, and with respect to the whole body, that the *rational* human members

members are among themselves, and as parts of the complete constitution and society of men. There are very few exceptions, that can, I think, be made to the general comparison; and scarce one perhaps, in those essential instances, on which alone the allusion is grounded. In the outward *corporeal* structure, there are no jarrings or contrarieties; there is no such thing as a detached member, all whose functions terminate in itself. This would introduce the utmost disorder and confusion; render the body of man, as a *compound* frame, quite unserviceable and useless; and blot out all the characters of adorable divine wisdom, that are now so strongly engraven upon it: Nay, the consequence, in many cases, must be, the immediate and utter extinction of animal life.

ON the contrary, on what does its health, its ease, its very subsistence as a sensitive machine, its ministration to the soul, and to the high purposes of reason, so evidently depend, as on the nice proportion and adjustment, and the harmonious concurring operation, of its various parts? Might not a man altogether as well *want* a head, a heart, eyes, hands, and the like, as not have them *united*, and *conspiring* in their influence, for *common* preservation and defence?

IN like manner, when *man* indulges to narrow and contracted views, and consults, and acts, for himself alone, as if he was an unallied, self-sufficient, and independent frame; are not all his benevolent affections, all his natural powers of doing good, in effect represented as absurd and vain; as fit only to be discouraged, and rooted out of the soul! Is not the life of *reason* lost! The *social*, the *divine*, life! Employed in the most exalted pursuits, and abounding in the purest and sweetest pleasures, that

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human nature is capable of! And if the glowings of *humanity* were univerſally checked, and reſſeſſed, and the mutual communication of *kind* and *friendly offices* univerſally ſuſpended, what could this open to our view, but one wide and general ſcene of diſtreſs and miſery! What could it portend leſs, than inevitable ruin to the *whole* ſpecies!

To openneſs of heart, and mutual confidence would, then, ſucceed everlaſting *diſtruſts*, and uneaſy *ſuſpicions*; to delight in the proſperity of others, a malignant ſpirit of *envy*; to concord and harmony, *diſunion*, and *alienation* of affection; to compaſſion, *hardneſs* of heart. Theſe are the neceſſary attendants on a ſelfiſh *unſocial* diſpoſition. And they, in their turn, muſt propagate and ſpread the miſchief much farther; begetting mutual reproaches and animoſities; rage, revilings, cool deliberate malice, and other inflamed and unnatural paſſions; which deface the light and luſtre, and the ſtrong tendencies to *good*, which, in the language of the ſon of *Syrac*, GOD originally *poured out* over all his rational *works*; and anticipate the blackeſt horrors of hell itſelf.

THAT mankind therefore are a *ſociety*, or *ſyſtem*, linked together by inviolable bonds of reaſon, inſtinct, intereſt, no one who has examined his own inward frame, or made obſervations on the general propenſities, and workings, of human nature in others; no one, who has reflected juſtly on the fatal conſequences of the contrary ſcheme, can be tempted to doubt. That this is a ſentiment, which moſt powerfully inforces univerſal *benevolence*, and *ſympathy*, that enlarges and raiſes the heart, above the influence of every *baſe earth-born* paſſion, that inſpires it with great deſigns
of

of *public* usefulness, and gives it *god-like* feelings; the generous and good experience, and have ever allowed. There can be no true *religion*, no right *knowledge* of GOD, or of his immutable *laws* of nature and providence, where this is not admitted, as a fundamental principle: And all the duties of social morality may be deduced, and, in a great measure, derive their obligation, from it. And, accordingly we find, that St. *Paul* has wisely assigned it, as a reason, the first and chief reason (within the *scope* of which, all others are comprehended) why we should *put away lying*, and *speak every man truth with his neighbour* *.

To which might have been added, with *equal propriety*, if the circumstances of the case had required such a particular and more copious exhortation, grounded on the same principle——
 ‘ *Be affable and obliging, modest and condescending, compassionate and tender-hearted. Rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep* †. Aim, in your several stations, to be as *useful*
 ‘ as *possible*, and to communicate the most *diffusive* and *general*
 ‘ good. Endeavour to instruct the *ignorant*, and reclaim the *vicious*, to revive the *disconsolate*, to relieve the *miserable*. Avoid
 ‘ criminal *artifice* and *fraud*, and practise strict *justice*, and *fidelity*, in all its branches. Let not *prejudice*, or *pride*, or any *views*
 ‘ of private advantage, tempt you, let not a misguided and head-
 ‘ strong *zeal* ever transport you, to violate these holy and immuta-
 ‘ ble obligations. In a word, reduce all your appetites, all your
 ‘ affections and desires, to that calm *temperature*, and, in the va-
 ‘ rious relations of life, behave with that *equity* and *candour*, that
 ‘ *gentleness* and *goodness*, that mutual *respect* and *honour*, as will
 ‘ best subserve the great ends, for which *human nature* was consti-

* Eph. iv. 25.

† Rom. xii. 15.

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‘tuted *social*—and of *human society at large*: For, as MEN——
‘we are all members one of another*.’

BUT how *members one of another*? This may, perhaps, be thought by some a strange expression, and scarce intelligible. For is the head a *member* of the foot, or the foot of the head, in the *natural* body; to which the allusion is here made? Not strictly and literally without doubt; but there is a figurative sense, in which it may be allowed. For as every member of the body derives nourishment, and strength, from what *every other* member contributes, together with itself, to the general health and vigour of the body; and as the fitness of each, to perform its respective functions, arises from, at least, the *common harmonious* operation of all the *vital* members; the expression, even though it referred to this, could have no impropriety of meaning in it. And much less as it is allusive only; which never implies an exact similitude, and correspondence between the subjects.

‘BESIDES, in the *community* of mankind especially, the service, which the *individual* members render to the whole, is not *immediate*, but by directly assisting, supporting, strengthening, and comforting *other* members:’ So that they are in the *first* step, as it were, ministering members *one to another*; and, by this alone, can acquire the character of being sound and good members of the collective body.

ADD to this, that the phrase, which I am now defending, conveys to the mind several stronger and more distinct ideas, than the barely asserting, that all mankind are united together in one society, or body; such as ——The close communion, and

* Eph. iv. 25.

constant strict intercourse, of honour, fidelity, and justice, that is necessary to be maintained between men and men; as if each *individual* was himself the *body*, to which all *the rest* were bound, as far as they had opportunity, to be *subservient*—their inseparable connection for *private* advantage, as well as for the *general* good—their common wants, their reciprocal dependencies and obligations, and, that what is the happiness of the *whole* must, also, be the true interest of all the *parts*—All which principles, scattered up and down, diffusely, in the writings of the *Heathen* Philosophers, are comprehended in one short maxim of that *divine* Philosopher, *St. Paul*. So that let it be allowed, if the objector requires it, that, in the expression itself, figures are heaped on figures; yet the sense is clear and unperplexed: Recommending the offices and duties of humanity, on the justest principles, and drawing in *self-love*, to be itself an *auxiliary*, to the cause of universal benevolence.

I SHOULD now put an end, to my general remarks on the subject, were it not proper to take notice, that the same writer, in another passage, has affirmed of *Christians*, as a singular and separate society from mankind in general, that they, *being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another* *. But though they are *distinguished*, from the bulk of the world, by the profession of a more pure and refined religion, they are still a society of *men*; and bound to observe all the *primitive* rules, and statutes, of that universal society. It is impossible, that, in order to be a *Christian*, it should be necessary to cease to be a man: On the contrary, if the *Gospel*, instead of confirming, had abrogated the common ties of human nature, it would be both impiety, and inhumanity, to embrace it. If it

* Rom. xii. 5.

was

8 *On the social nature, and character, of man.*

was built on the subversion, or deformation, of *nature*, it must have been a most absurd and unnatural religion. *Christians* therefore, as well as families, neighbourhoods, and civil societies, are no more than *subordinate* branches of the first great and universal community; and this is the light, in which alone the Gospel can recommend itself, to the esteem, and honour, of wise and impartial inquirers.

AND now, from what has been already offered in a general way, several very important observations naturally arise,

AND the FIRST remark, which I shall make, is this, *viz.*—that the *social* character of man is not *accidental*, and *acquired*, but natural. This has been in part explained, and established already; but as it is a principle of the utmost moment in itself, and of great importance in the present argument, it deserves to be more fully illustrated. Without stating it clearly, we can form no just idea of *characters*, or *manners*; of what human life *is*, or *ought* to be. If all the *social* obligations of mankind spring from present exigencies, in the outward course of their affairs, they will naturally be led, to represent them to their thoughts, only as *mutable* and *transient* obligations; which are utterly dissolved as soon as the present necessity ceases, which unites them together, for mutual assistance and security. The whole of this great, extensive, and illustrious branch of virtue, which has performed such heroic enterprizes, and raised such god-like characters, will be resolved into *policy*, *private* convenience, and the most *debased* and *groveling* principles, eclipsing all its loveliness and dignity. It will be for *our own* sakes, if we provide for our *families*, oblige our *friends*, serve our *country*; in a word, we shall be just and benevolent, only from *selfishness*: An account
this

this, that shocks the reason, and the native inbred sentiment of every human heart; and would be received, with abhorrence and disdain, even amongst wild and savage nations.

BESIDES, to what does it lead, but, in the end, to the subversion of all order, and the utter extirpation of social morality? For the sum of this licentious doctrine is——‘Do good, not as you have *opportunity*, but as you are likely to *get* by it: When it subjects you to any *hazard*, or *inconvenience*, to relieve your fellow-creatures——desert them, and leave them exposed to indigence and misery: And whenever you think it to be for your *advantage*, and the proper means to establish your own *private* happiness——encroach upon your neighbours rights, deceive, oppress, impose on honest ignorance, and simple artless credulity; and trample under foot all the laws of society.’ *Interest*, it may be said, is a substantial thing; *generosity*, and *public spirit- edness*, are airy flights, fit to be indulged by none, but romantic and soaring *enthusiasts*, who prefer fancies to realities.

BUT, on the contrary, if the ties of *social* humanity result from nature itself, they must hold eternally, under all possible changes, that can happen in the external state of the world, and in the circumstances of particular men. Nay, if we could suppose a man left to wander, in the most destitute and solitary parts of the earth, without a probability of being ever restored to *conversation*, and *commerce*, with his fellow-creatures, he would still be obliged to cultivate equity and benevolence, and all those other *social* qualities and dispositions, which his very constitution strongly prompts to; and which are the refinement and perfection of it. And by this means, man will ever be respectable, lovely, happy in himself, and ready for all offices of goodness.

AND now, that the *social* is, indeed, his true and natural character, appears undeniably from hence, that the love of mankind, probity, honour, gratitude, and the like (*absurd* virtues, because *impossible* to be exercised, but in a state of *society*) are however universal sentiments, and so deeply planted in the mind, that it is scarce possible to root them out. The seeds of them still remain, and appear strong in various instances, even in the most corrupt and degenerate. And if these are indeed *natural* (as universal experience testifies) and not *occasional* and *artificial* obligations, they are a clear demonstration, that man was originally disposed and made for society; and not driven to it by incidental necessities, without any immediate direction, and bent, of his nature.

AGAIN, *society* is absolutely necessary, in order to perfect the *moral* constitution of man. Without it, he could neither improve his understanding, to its due pitch of knowledge and experience; nor exert the most generous and pleasing affections of his mind. His strongest instincts and desires, his innumerable wants, which cannot be supplied by himself alone, and his dependent condition, all lead him to *society*. Eternal *solitude* would, of itself, make him miserable; he therefore abhors, and flies from it; and to society, as the source of his noblest employments, and most exalted, heart-refreshing, delights. Add to this, that the faculty of speech is one of the most significant *indications*, that the GOD of nature could give, in the original make of man, that he was intended for social intercourses; and chiefly, indeed, for a life of society. And the consequence, from these premisses, is this undeniably—
 ‘ That the *duties* of every *relation*, which can *properly* be intro-

introduced into human social life, are laws of nature *irreversible*.'

MY next observation is, that man is formed, by nature, a moral *social* being, with a view to his own happiness. The independent unchangeable Creator neither wanted, nor was able to receive, any accession of glory, power, or felicity to himself: What then could induce him to communicate *being*, but the communication of *happiness* together with it; of a suitable good to all states, and orders, of creatures, capable of enjoying good? And what is the *good*, which is most properly adapted to every rank of being? What can it be, but that which gratifies the strongest implanted tendencies, and affections, of their respective natures? For sensitive beings, sensitive satisfactions; for intelligent beings, intellectual; for the *social*, the pleasures resulting from universal benevolence. And from hence it follows, 'that all the *relative* stations, in which one man is placed to another, must terminate, ultimately, in the moral *social* happiness of mankind, if they are derived from *nature*, or consistent with it.'

FOR whatever was the *primitive* intention, of man's being created social, must also be the *ultimate* end, of all the particular relations, and offices, in human society. Whatever tends to mischief, upon the whole, is an *unnatural* relation; and ought to be for ever abolished. And if such a conduct be pursued, even in *worthy* and *useful* relations of life, as (if it was universal) would every where introduce unhappiness and confusion, it must stand condemned by the everlasting laws of nature, and of GOD.

FURTHER, as the *social* instincts and affections of human nature are *universal*, and *mutual*, and directed in their exercise, throughout the *whole system*, from man to man; and as this most certainly infers, that all mankind are, in the disposition and order of nature, one great and closely compacted body; we may, and must, conclude upon the whole, that their social state and character were intended, not *barely* for good, but for *universal* good: 'And this must be the true *aim*, and should be the natural and direct *subserviency*, of every relative and social obligation.'

I SHALL add but one remark more, and that is, that the idea of men, as a *community*, necessarily implies in it, that there is a *governour* of this community; to whom the whole, and every individual member of it, is accountable. 'A society without laws, and laws without government, and government without a supreme administrator of government, and dispenser of justice, are as much contradictions, as a living body without a head.' The *governour* therefore, who, in the present case, can be no other than the Creator of all mankind, and the father of their social frame, must be like a *constituent vital* member of the society, without whom the *whole* would instantly dissolve.

AND from hence it appears, that the authority of GOD is most properly introduced, to support the obligation of all *relative* duties. The *social* nature, from whence they spring, the *motives*, by which they are enforced, the *pleasures*, which they yield at present, the *happiness*, to which they ultimately tend, are all his wise contrivance and constitution. Without him, nature, and all its laws, are no more than empty sounds, without

out a meaning. By his influence, and power, they are invigorated; separated from him, they die, or are reduced to a state of non-existence.

CAN we then, without renouncing our reason, consider any thing as a *natural*, and not regard it likewise as a *divine*, law? Can any office, in *society*, be a dictate of *nature*, which is not, at the same time, a duty of *piety*? Can we esteem ourselves to be truly moral men, for treating, with a becoming tenderness and respect, the *inferior* members of the great community, to which we belong; when GOD, the founder, the head, the life of it is not *in all our thoughts*? It is, most surely, an inexcusable omission, to drop the consideration of GOD, in any branch of human duty; on whose being, preservation, and government, the universe, and all its parts, do continually depend. In the same sense, that covetousness, and other vices, which alienate the heart from the father and sovereign ruler of spirits, are thus described; it is an impious, and a kind of *idolatrous* practice, thus to center our ultimate views in *nature*, or any other *creature*, to the neglect of the *Creator*, who is *over all*, and *blessed for evermore* *.

So that, upon the whole, we are hereby plainly taught, the gross absurdity of endeavouring, in any instance whatever, to separate *morality* from religion; since even in *relative* duties, to which the notion of morality is chiefly confined, it is impossible to exclude a reverence of GOD, and a serious regard to his will and constitution: Or, if we act reasonably and wisely, ‘to avoid
‘ considering them in a religious, as well as in an abstracted moral, light.’

* Rom. i. 25.

C H A P. II.

*Containing some reflections, and observations, on
Relative Duties.*

I PROCEED now, from discoursing of the *social* nature of man at large, and the universal obligations arising from it, to treat in general, of what are more immediately called *relative* duties. And, here, there are several things necessary to be suggested, both to enable us to judge, more accurately, concerning their true *nature* and *extent*, and to put a stop to that too general *violation* of them, which seems now to prevail, among all ranks and orders of men. And these may all, I apprehend, be reduced to the two following heads—The great *importance* of a conscientious and strict discharge of these duties—And the *principles*, that are necessary to be habitually impressed on the mind, together with the *rules* to be observed, in the regulation of our temper and conduct; that we may be the better prepared, to behave with honour, and usefulness to others, in all *relations*; in every *state* of our more *immediate* mutual dependence; in the *closer* affinities of nature, and human society.

AND, FIRST, as to the *importance*, the *signal* and *vast* importance, of an exact and careful discharge of *relative* duties. This is a point so clear, and the evidences of it are so common and notorious, within the compass of every man's experience, that it scarce, indeed, requires to be particularly insisted on. The necessity of a benevolent disposition, of gentleness and condescension,

fion, of social justice, fidelity, and candor, strongly appears even in the *lowest offices* of life; which are apt to be overlooked, as almost unworthy the *attention* of the rest of mankind; and the *affairs* of which are thought, to have hardly any *connection*, with the general order and happiness of the world.

BUT when the characters are more *raised*, and of greater *influence*, it must be so much the more *conspicuous*, that the exercise of these virtues is of the utmost moment; and the confusions and mischiefs, arising from the neglect of them, must be the more *widely* felt. Nor is it possible, in nature, that it should be otherwise, but that all virtues, which are allowed to be becoming human nature, useful, necessary, in all scenes, in all conditions, by which the outward state of mankind is diversified, will however be attended with more *beneficial*, or the want of them with more *injurious*, consequences; as the persons, immediately concerned, have it in their power, by their authority, their example, or by any other means, to contribute, in a *larger*, or *smaller*, proportion, to the good, or hurt, of their fellow-creatures. 'Their being thus *adapted*, to all the *gradations* of society, seems, strongly, to intimate their *universal* importance; their *greater use*, as their natural effects are capable of being more fully discerned, and with less interruption extended——the *high degree* of their importance.'

BUT all this, it may still be said, is in a good measure presuming, and taking the point, on which the whole argument turns, *viz.* the *real importance* of these virtues, for granted. Let us, then, proceed to direct and positive proofs; and begin, with what is the most weighty consideration of all——That the just and constant performance, of *relative duties*, is of the utmost
confe-

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consequence to the interest of human society, and of mankind in general. *Relative duties*, in the largest sense of the phrase, include the whole of *social virtue*; all the obligations of men to men; and, in this view, they must either be of eternal and indispensable necessity, or all *human offices* must be utterly abolished, throughout the *whole* species, to the rendering man much more *degenerate* in his kind, as well as unspeakably more *miserable*, than the irrational brute creation——Who, though they are formed for some sort of *society*, and driven on to it, without reflection or choice, by resistless ungovernable *instincts*, are capable of executing no part of its sublime *moral* scheme, nor of enjoying any of its highest and most generous pleasures; or rather, indeed, they *herd* together through a blind impulse, of which they know neither the *cause*, nor the *use*; but are, with respect to their nature and all its original powers, strictly speaking *un-social*.

‘ BUT we are now treating, not of *social* duties at large, not of the duties of all mankind to each other, but of men particularly *circumstanced*; of persons more intimately and nearly *related*, and united together, by *special* ties: Such as husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, magistrates and subjects, &c. All which, more *confined* relations, though derived from the first inviolable relation, that was established by the wise author of nature, between the whole human community, and subservient to the great ends and purposes of it, must, however, necessarily introduce *new* and *peculiar* obligations; distinct, in many instances, from the common promiscuous obligations of humanity. These distinct and peculiar duties are justly stiled *relative*, as the universal duties of men may, perhaps, be more properly denoted by the name of *social*; but they are both equally sacred,

facred, and necessary to hold together, in right order, the frame of society; and to the happiness of the world.'

INDEED, *one* wife, affectionate, and tender *parent*, anxious and provident for his children's good, and discharging, every part of his *duty*, with the utmost care and exactness, will contribute very little *visibly*, and so as to attract the *grosser* observation, to the general order and tranquility. His *influence* may perhaps, to outward appearance, extend, scarce at all, beyond his own immediate sphere of action. Whatever *exceeds* this may be, entirely owing to the force of a singular and amiable example; the operation of which must, in many instances, be confined within *narrow* limits, and cannot *diffuse* itself so, as to reach any considerable part of mankind.

AND, on the contrary, *one* unnatural father, or husband, void of decency and conjugal affection, or a *single* instance of a master, imperious, harsh, and oppressive, may make no *perceivable* addition to the sum of human disorder, and misery, upon the whole. The same may hold true of *two*, *three*, or an *hundred* such examples, in these different kinds of misbehaviour.

'BUT, what would be the case, if they were *universal*, and strictly copied, throughout all the *various relations* of life!' *As far* as they prevail, disorder and misery always follow; if they therefore prevailed universally, would not the consequence be, *universal* disorder and misery! It must surely be so; nor is it possible, according to the present laws of nature, and established rule of the Divine government, in most cases to prevent it—— But has the *one* unnatural parent a *single* licence to be unnatural? Has the *one* tyrannical master, before supposed, a *peculiar* indul-

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gence allowed him to be cruel? No: All mankind are, by nature, equal; or in other words, every man, in the same *circumstances*, has a claim to the same *prerogatives*. If, therefore, these excesses are not *allowable* in all fathers, and in all masters, they must be *inexcusable*, and proportionably *hurtful*, in *all*. And this indeed is the only rule, we can follow, in estimating the excellency, and importance, of every social virtue; and the infamy, and mischievous consequences, of every unsocial vice—If *all* men acted, as *one vicious* man, disclaiming the ties of nature, and spurning at the laws and constitutions of heaven, thinks himself at liberty to act; what would be the *result* upon the whole? This is the single point to be decided.

APPLY it, then, to the case now before us: And let *parents* and *children*, *husbands* and *wives*, *masters* and *servants*, faithfully discharge their respective incumbent duties; and let the same exactness, in mutual offices of benevolence and equity, run uniformly through all *other relations*, that may subsist in human society; and it must produce the most desirable and blessed state of things, that the imperfection of human nature, and the numberless unavoidable accidents, which attend its present situation, will admit of—Mutual complaisance, free unrestrained intercourses of benevolence and friendship, concord in families, regular government in civil societies, and general harmony and peace amongst men.

BUT if we *reverse* this beautiful and agreeable scene, and suppose neither *parents*, nor *children*, *husbands*, nor *wives*, *masters*, nor *servants*, to take any care about discharging their respective duties; the world must either soon be depopulated, or sink into a state of *barbarism*, ten thousand times *worse* than any, which

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is *at present* to be found, among the most rude and uncivilized nations. Which demonstrates, beyond every exception, the tendency of *relative* duties, rightly discharged, to the establishment and support of human society; and of the opposite vices, to its entire dissolution; that the one are the natural means of prosperity; the other of most dreadful confusion, and ruin, to mankind.

THUS the case stands in *general*: And we may, therefore, fairly presume, that it cannot appear with a much better aspect, when we descend to *particulars*. For the fate of the *whole* must involve in it (though with *different* measures of the common distress allotted to individuals) that of all its constituent *parts*. It may not, however, be useless to trace the argument a little, so far as it relates to every man's *private* concerns.

AND, here, it will be found, that the being exact and careful, in the discharge of all *relative* offices, is not more necessary for the welfare of the whole, than it is to *self-enjoyment*——To the enjoyment of *health*; which the disquietude and turbulence of passion, occasioned by *domestic* jars and oppositions, and by a consciousness of *guilt*, (if we are ourselves the *authors* of this confusion) has a direct tendency to impair——And to the enjoyment of *composure* and *serenity* of mind; with which, strife and variance, discord, anger, and impatience, are utterly inconsistent——In a word, to the enjoyment of that undisturbed and calm temper; without which, we shall find ourselves, in a great measure, indisposed, both for offices of *religion*, and all *social virtue*.

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I NEED not enlarge on these heads, because every man's experience must justify, and confirm, the truth of all that I have now briefly hinted: And may, without doubt, furnish some *examples* too, among the *many* that occur every where, of persons, who, from *defects* in point of *relative* duties, or direct *violations* of them (carried to such an extravagant pitch, as to banish *peace* from families, and keep the mind in a perpetual *ferment*) have first grown *indifferent*, and, in the end, utterly *abandoned* all *thought*, about religion; contracted an inward habit of *spleen* and *ill-nature*, which rendered them disobliging and offensive to all with whom they conversed, and given themselves up, so entirely, to a desperate course of *carelessness* and *intemperance*, as has thrown their worldly affairs into confusion, and terminated, at length, in loss of credit, diminution of substance, in extreme want and misery. And the *fall* has frequently been, to render it the more deplorable, from *promising professions* of religion, from a *mild, friendly, affable* disposition, from *sobriety* and *good economy*, and the *prospect* of great outward advantages.

MANY other particulars might be mentioned, under this topic, of the singular *importance* of *relative* duties; but in a general, and a kind of introductory, account to a more particular consideration of them, I think, what has been already said may be sufficient: And therefore, I proceed briefly to enumerate the *principles*, that are necessary to be habitually impressed on our minds, together with the *rules* to be observed, in the government of our temper and conduct; that we may be the better prepared to behave with honour, and usefulness to others, in all *relations*; in every *state* of our more *immediate* mutual depen-

dependence; in the *closer* affinities of nature, and human society.

THE best *general* preparation, for an exact and chearful discharge of all *relative* duties, is a benevolent honest heart: A disposition full of *benevolence*, that we may be furnished, with the principles of honour and truth, generosity and condescension, fidelity and candour, and with all those other soft and amiable qualities, which *hold* more *closely* together, at the same time that they *endear*, every social bond; and an *honest* mind, ready to perform, in its appointed *station*, whatever it discovers to be *right* and *fit*, and to adhere inflexibly to it, whether it be, in consequence of an original and universal dictate of *nature*, or an *express law* of Almighty GOD. Where *benevolence* is wanting, there is wanting, likewise, the very temper of society; its animating spirit; and the spring of its most enobling pleasures; and where *honesty*, it is absurd to expect, that any regard will be paid to the most important social offices, when they interfere with corrupt and sinister views, of private advantage. In a word, selfishness *cannot*, and art and dissimulation *will not*, act steadily for the common good, or in support of the mutual equitable rights of mankind.

‘SUFFER me just to add, that *integrity* of heart must, in the necessary nature of the thing, equally respect GOD, the head, as *men*, who are the inferior members of society. It is as much concerned about what is *his will*, as what are *their rights*; which are all formed, settled, extended, and limited, by his wise order and course of nature. So that what, I at first asserted, comes to the same upon the whole with this, *viz.* that *probity*, *benevolence*, and *piety*, are the surest preservatives from all unfriendly, insulting

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insulting, and oppressive conduct; and will most effectually support the *peculiar* duties, of every *station* and character in human life.'

BUT, besides the cultivating, these *general* best dispositions, for the discharge of all human *social* obligations, there are other, more particular directions, proper to be observed——As for example, it is highly expedient, that we endeavour to get as *clear* an *idea* (and *impress* it upon the mind as *strongly* as possible) of the *wisdom* of GOD, in appointing the several *relations* of life——In *which*, every man, within a narrow sphere, suited to his capacities of mind, and his natural powers of action, may give a *due scope* to all his affections, and principles, of benevolence, and exercise the most important branches, at least, of this divine virtue; by *which*, the different ranks, and just subordinations, that must necessarily take place among such creatures as we are, are *properly maintained*, and *regulated*; and the accidental *varieties*, arising from improvements of the understanding, from prudence, industry, and the just acquisition of authority, influence, or property, in greater or less degrees, are made all to *conspire* in the preservation, and strength, of human society in general. A station, and employment, are provided, adapted to every order, to every genius, that *no one* member of the community, while he continues capable of *service*, may have a pretence to cut himself off, as it were, from *the whole*; and indulge to sloth and inactivity.

IN a word, the *relative situation* of man is wisely ordained, to relieve the many cares and sollicitudes, to which he is at present subject, by the tenderest intercourses of sympathy and friendship; to soften rugged tempers; to assuage tumultuous passion;
and

and prevent that univerfal savagenefs, which would infallibly be introduced, and fpread itfelf over all the world, if thefe *leffer affinities* were diffolved; and men were not more *clofely* allied, and attached to each other, than they are, merely, by partaking of one *common* nature.

THESE are, all, evident marks of a *wife* defign, and *gracious* difpofition of things, in the great original of nature: And the maintaining, constantly, a lively fenfe of this, muft be very efficacious in its confequences, with refpect to *social* manners. ‘For if the particular *relations*, in which I ftand, be juftly intiftuted, I muft think the *duties* of them to be indifpenfable.’ They will recommend themfelves, to my *choice* and *preference*, fo much the more powerfully, as I fee that they are not *arbitrarily* impofed, by the mere uncontrollable will of a fuperior; but are, in themfelves, *juft* and *necessary parts* of the fcheme, which the common parent of mankind originally *intended*, fhould take *effect*, for their greater convenience, and happinefs. In this cafe, *reason*, and *authority*, are ftremely harmonious and confederate principles, that fupport, and add weight to, each other; and it is likely, that the duty, required of us, will not be a *fullen* and *difpirited*, but a *vigorous* and *cheerful*, fervice.

AGAIN, let it be further confidered, and frequently inculcated, that the *duties* of every *relation*, fubfifting in human fociety, are *interchangeable*, and *mutual*: So that the *child* has as much a right to be ftubborn, as the *father* has to be unnatural; the *servant* to be remifs and unfaithful, as the *master* rigorous and cruel. The conduct on *both* fides is, indeed, quite out of nature; an oppofition to GOD; to reason, his eternal law; and to the good of mankind, the end of his government over *social* beings.

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ings. But if we could make the absurd supposition, that the parent had a right to deviate, *thus*, from nature; the right of the other must inevitably follow, as the *consequence* of it. And, therefore, if I, who am a *father*, resent, and severely condemn, my *sons* disobedience, I must, at the same time, virtually condemn *myself* (as one of an unfeeling, remorseless, temper) for being destitute of paternal tenderness and affection.

BUT to enforce, especially, the duties of the *two relations*, which I have just now mentioned, together with those of *magistrates* and *subjects*, let it be considered farther; 'that all these relations must have been intended for the advantage, and happiness (to the *utmost degree*, that their respective stations, and employments, will admit) of the *inferior* and *dependent* part, as well as of the *superior*; in their more prosperous (if it be, *in truth*, a more prosperous) and elevated condition.' They are still *men*; and must, of consequence, have a *right*, as far as they are capable of attaining to it fairly, to all the *happinesses* designed for men; though providence, for wise and most beneficial purposes, with respect to the whole, has placed them in a *lower* class; nay, be they ever so much *debased*, and *sunk* by their necessities. And this, one would think, should naturally *repress*, and *keep under*, all swellings of vanity and pride, and *check* every inclination to oppression, and tyranny, in those of *higher* rank.

ON the other hand, 'it is equally true, that no just reasonings, concerning the equality of all mankind by *nature*, nor any peculiar privileges, belonging to any particular denomination, or sect, of *religion*, can *abrogate* the laws of society; or the sacred mutual ties, by which men are engaged to each other.'

For

For mankind are by nature equal, *only* in this view, that, in the same *circumstances*, they have all a claim to the same *treatment*. If GOD had intended, that *inferior* stations, and *servile* offices, should not have taken place; he would have put every one upon a *level*, with respect to capacity, influence, situation, and outward advantages: But this must have been a scene of infinite *distraction*, and attended with universal *inconvenience*. Nor is it possible, that *Christianity*, or any other true scheme of *instituted* religion, should thus confound the order of the world, and subvert the wise establishments and constitutions of nature. So that by this principle, all *aspirings*, in the more *dependent* and *subdued* part of mankind, after an *undue* rank of equality, are likewise absolutely *repelled*; and proved to be wild, insolent, and impracticable.

To the serious consideration, and frequent impression, of these principles upon the mind, that they may become habitual to it; I beg leave to subjoin the following brief directions.—That, before we enter into *any relation*, we set ourselves to examine with care, what are the *duties*, which it *especially* requires; what kind of *behaviour* will render us most agreeable, and useful, to those with whom we are concerned, and best subserve the general good—That we expect not *perfection* in any, nor lay too much stress on nice punctilio's of honour, and respect—That we make favourable interpretations, and the most indulgent candid allowances, in all cases, that the nature of the cases themselves will bear—That we animadvert not, *too strictly*, on little failings and indiscretions; nor be *over rigid*, in censuring greater miscarriages; which appear to have proceeded from precipitation, oversight, want of due reflection, and the like, and not from a vicious malevolent heart, or a real *intention* to offend—

26 *Some reflections, and observations, on relative duties.*

That we avoid *moroseness*, which quickly spreads and propagates itself, and makes others sullen and disobliging; *unjust suspicions*, which are the bane of friendship, and destroy mutual confidence; *excesses of passion*, which blind the understanding, that it cannot form a right judgment; and *pride*, one of the most turbulent, and unfociable, of the bad principles, by which human nature is actuated; the *parent* of discord, and *averse* to every office of humanity.

AND, FINALLY, that we preserve a *calm* temper; or, if it happens to be, at any time, *inflamed* and *irritated*, allay the ferment, and reduce it to a state of composure and tranquility, as soon as possible: That, being free from inward perturbation, we may the more regularly attend, to *our own* incumbent *duty*; and influence others, by our *example*, to the like moderation, and strict regard to *their* respective *offices*.

UNDER the just impression of these principles, and the conduct of these general rules, *relations* will, in all probability, be by all parties *worthily* sustained; the chief *evils*, that now dishonour human manners, and infest society, will be *banished* from it; the *social* character of man will be raised, and retrieved from *ignominy*; and universal affability, complaisance, and order, *restored* to the world, in such a *degree*, at least, as scarce any former age has experienced; and the present, alas! from the dispositions and customs, that too generally prevail in it, has very little reason to hope for.

HOWEVER, attempts to *revive* the primitive *social* discipline, and a resolution to discharge *social* duties, in all instances, can by no means be deemed uselefs; because they may *restrain* abuses,

abuses, which they cannot *rectify*: They may correct *in part*; where they have not weight enough, to bring about an *entire* reformation. All the remarks, contained in this chapter, I have thought proper to put together, in as narrow a compass as possible, as a most natural and pertinent *introduction*, to the particular subjects hereafter to be considered.

C H A P. III.

Of the duties of the married state, in two SECTIONS.

S E C T. I.

Of the duties of Husbands.

IN the distinct consideration of particulars, I think it most proper to begin with the duties of the *married* state—because this was actually the *first relation* contracted, the first *special* tie, and bond of union, established in human life. And ever since, its primitive institution in paradise, it has continued to be, in the *order of nature* the *first*. It is necessary to be supposed, *before parents* or *children* could *regularly* exist; and, consequently, *long before* the distinct offices of *masters* and *servants*: And these *latter* might, and its reasonable to imagine would, in many instances have taken place, *before* mankind could have multiplied to such a degree, as to form *larger societies*; or to settle any of the various forms of *civil government*, from whence, the duties of *magistrates* and *subjects* are derived.

AND as the matrimonial relation is the *root* of all others, and has therefore, if we follow *nature*, a claim to our chief attention and regard; so the *husband's* duty, in the same order and train of priority and consequence, appears, to me, most proper to be first insisted on. 'But as it is utterly impossible, to know
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what his *duty* is, or what sort of *behaviour* may reasonably be expected from him, without fixing in general, what *rank* he holds, what *character* and *office* in society; I shall endeavour to state this matter distinctly, in a chain of connected and dependent propositions: Which will enable us to settle the grand point, by which the whole duty both of *husbands*, and *wives*, must be finally *adjusted*, and which is *interwoven*, throughout, with every *branch* of each.

AND here, charitably presuming, that I address myself, by the far greater part at least, to a nation of *Christians*, I shall produce the testimony of *revelation* as an unexceptionable authority; but corroborated in every part, for universal conviction, by the concurring voice of *nature*, and the surest dictates of *reason*.

AND, in the FIRST place, *revelation* teaches, ‘ that *marriage* is a *divine* institution, and for all possible reasons, but what virtually annul the contract itself, and are inconsistent with the very nature and design of it, *indissoluble*.’ And that by marriage is intended, ‘ only the union of one man with one woman,’ is necessary to be admitted upon *Scripture* principles; because our Saviour has plainly intimated (since the course of his argument necessarily requires this interpretation) that GOD originally created but *one male*, and *one female* * : And in order to point out, in the strongest terms, that this is the most holy and inviolable of all human relations, he has, farther, expressly declared, that *for this cause*, a man should leave even his *father*, and his *mother* [i. e. disclaim, comparatively, the nearest and most deeply rooted ties of nature] and cleave to his wife †.

* Matth. xix. 4.

† Ver. 5.

SECONDLY, 'The whole of this reasoning, experience, and the wisest observations on the real state of the world, confirm and justify.' For as the number of *males* is, upon the exactest calculations that have been made, no more with respect to *females*, than as about *thirteen to twelve*; this, allowing for the extraordinary but probable *decreases*, to which *men* are peculiarly subject, will reduce the comparison to as exact an *equality*, as the infinite *contingencies*, which may happen in such cases as these, can possibly admit of. 'So that if *one*, throughout the whole species, were, through his superior wealth or power beyond other men, to become possessed of *ten* wives, *nine* men, invested with equal privileges by nature, could have no claim to so much as *one* wife:' And the same holds true, in *proportion*, as to any other higher, or lower, number.

BESIDES *conjugal* affection cannot be maintained, in any just degree, where it is thus *divided*; and the jealousies, competitions, and intrigues between several *equal* pretenders (in their *own esteem* at least equal) to the distinction of the husband's *first* regard, must convert all families into scenes of riot and confusion; and engage both *wives*, and *children*, in perpetual schemes of opposing and supplanting each other. This therefore, as it is quite contrary to the plain *design* of the GOD of *nature*, could never, in itself, be a *constitution*, proceeding from his perfect wisdom and goodness: Because nothing can result from it that is *rational*, and properly *human*; nothing *social*; nothing but what encourages exorbitant gratification of wanton *brutal* desire. The very same may be said, with respect to *concubinage*; for though, one be acknowledged as the only proper *wife*, this is in reality nothing better, than raising *one concubine* above the *rest*, against
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the most evident dictates of *nature*, and perhaps without *merit*. The contentions, the mutual undermining arts, the designs of mischief, the mischief itself, will still be very nearly *the same*.

As therefore, THIRDLY, it appears from what has been said, that one *single* individual of each sex was intended, in *marriage*, to be united to each other; all *associations*, without the marriage-state, are equally unnatural with *polygamy* itself: It may, from hence, be most rationally inferred, that the bond of *m matrimony*, as the doctrine of *revelation* has fixed and ascertained it, was intended to be *inviolable*; ‘ unless for such causes, as of themselves render it *void* and *ineffectual*, with respect to the principal *ends* of the institution, and the *mutual contract* voluntarily entered into.’

AND if this, again, be true, it necessarily follows from husbands and wives cohabiting for *life* (or till the contract *ceases* of itself) for the continued propagation of the species, and the proper education of children according to their various ranks—— ‘ that *families* were originally intended by GOD to be *societies*, the *seminaries* of mankind; and the *schools*, in which they are to be tutored and disciplined, and trained up for action in a more extensive sphere; for usefulness to larger societies, and to mankind in general.’

BUT societies can never be supported without *government*; and *government* and *order* cannot possibly be maintained, where there are *two* powers absolutely *equal*, *neither* of which is ultimately obliged to yield, and give way to the other. The only question, therefore, that remains is, which must *submit*, in cases of important competition with respect to family affairs (over which

which both have a real right of direction and government, derived from nature) the *husband*, or the *wife*? And let women of discretion and modesty be left, themselves, to decide—— ‘Whether their sex is not, generally, the more *weak* and *defenceless*——Whether the party, that wants the *power* to *support*, ought ever to aspire after an ineffectual and useleſs *authority*——And whether, tracing it throughout all nature, the supreme *decision*, where any supremacy can be allowed, be not always inseparably connected, with *protection* and *defence*? The question is not concerning particular instances, but what is the right rule upon *the whole*; that, whatever it be, is the *fixed law* of nature, however it may admit of some peculiar exceptions. The husband has, and must have in general, the largest share in the *negotiation* of business, in *providing* for the family, in the *acquisition* of property, in *defending* all the other branches of the society, of which he is, without doubt, constituted *one* head, from distress and insult: And ultimate *authority*, in the voice of nature itself, follows this.’

LET me only add, that I intend not in all this (as might easily be collected from what has been already hinted) to dispute absolutely the *right* of the *wife* to *govern*, because as she is chiefly employed in the management of domestic affairs, and, especially, when the husband is obliged to be absent, for a considerable space of time, this right is necessary to be admitted; or else entire *anarchy* and *confusion* must ensue: And, farther, that if the supreme authority of the *husband* be allowed as a clear and fixed point, it is more *immediately* directed over the inferior members of the society only; and with respect to the wife (and that in a very few instances, where there is a mutual tender affection, and a tolerable share of prudence) it is but more *remote* and *consequential*.

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‘ THE case, most *parallel* to it, seems to be, where husbands and wives are jointly invested with a *higher* sovereignty: Though both are *equal sharers* in the government, as to the *general* administration of it, yet the *decisive* power in all *critical* affairs, that demand an immediate determination, must be lodged in *one*. And the condition of the other is not so properly that of a *subject*, but of a *second* in authority.’

FROM whence it is plain, that *husbands* transgress the rules of their duty, without sense of shame, or regard to decency, when they are imperious and domineering; and behave as *tyrants* to *slaves*, rather than with that respect and honour, which are most surely owing to persons, who have a *natural* right to govern, though in a state of *subordination*: When they insolently boast of their *power*, and are forward to exert it in *trifles*: When they *dictate*, without attempting to *persuade*: When they will hearken to no *advice*, nor bear an *opposition*, however mild and gentle, to their schemes. This must have a direct tendency to alienate the *affections* of the *wife*, from so stubborn and morose a temper; to sow the *seeds* of eternal family dissensions; and, of consequence, utterly to defeat the *end* of that wise and sacred institution, which was intended, by the great parent of *both sexes*, to be the source of their tenderest endearments to each other, and of their most choice and delicate pleasures.

AND now, I would fain persuade myself upon the whole, that no wife or virtuous woman can think, that I have stated this case *rigorously*; but rather with unexceptionable *moderation*: Because the *Scriptures* of the New Testament, and which they generally profess to believe, have spoken of it in a much stronger

and higher strain. The language of them is—Wives, *submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the LORD: For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Therefore, as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands, in every thing.*—Let the wife see, that she reverence her husband*—even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well †.

HAVING thus, as I apprehend, laid the true foundation, upon the law of *nature*, and the concurrent testimony of the *Christian* religion (in which the supreme authority of the *husband* is expressly declared, and supported as a *right indisputable*) I now proceed to explain *his duty*, to the wife, more distinctly. And all the chief branches of it, at least, may be reduced to the following heads, *viz.* ‘love; fidelity; convenient and decent accommodation, according to his rank and circumstances in life; respect; defence against injuries; the improvement of her mind, as far as there are opportunities for it, in religion and virtue, and the knowledge which is best suited to her character; and inviolate union.’

To which, perhaps, may be added (though it be needless for me to specify them distinctly, as they are so immediately and universally obvious; and must arise from *present* circumstances, to which *summary rules* cannot be so easily accommodated) to which, I say, may perhaps, be added, a few *discretionary* rules, to prevent discord and variance in the marriage state, and preserve conjugal affection undiminished: That what was designed to soften cares, and to be a scene of most refined friendship and

* Eph. v. 22, 23, 24, 33.

† 1 Pet. iii. 6.

delight,

delight, may not be changed, by an utter abuse and perversion of its nature, into the most grievous *infelicity* and *burden* of human life. And these rules of *caution* and *prudence*, though both parties are in truth equally concerned in them, are with peculiar reason annexed to the duty of *husbands*, and addressed to them chiefly; because they are generally apt to *arrogate* to themselves, as a kind of prerogative belonging to their sex, greater compass of understanding and strength of mind; and therefore if this claim be *just*, and not aggravated a little by pride and self-flattery, it is natural to expect that they will maintain a stricter *guard*, and the harmony of the married state, and the regularity and good order of families, must *then* be supposed to be principally intrusted to *their care*. Their indiscretions will be more *inexcusable*, if their superior abilities are presumed, and allowed; as well as much more *mischievous* on account of their greater influence, and the more prevalent force of their example. Let me now say somewhat, briefly, on each of the abovementioned heads.

THE FIRST branch of the *husband's* duty, to be considered and explained, is *love*. What *St. Paul* has affirmed, concerning the whole duty which we owe our neighbour, holds equally true in the present case——*it is summarily comprehended in love* *. This is the source from whence it *springs*, the spirit that *animates* the whole, the principle into which it may be ultimately *resolved*. It is as the root to the branches, and as the soul to the body. This Apostle, therefore, has directed thus: *Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them* †. Which is as if he had said, ‘ You will entirely and faithfully discharge your duty as *husbands*, by the exercise of a sincere affection, in

* Rom. xiii. 9.

† Colof. iii. 19.

all its natural and just *consequences*; and by avoiding all the *contrarities* to love; all such injurious and harsh conduct, which will gradually root out of your own breasts, this *generous social* principle, and create *coldness, dislike, and aversion*, in the person, to whom you stand most nearly *related*; that is as disagreeable and distasteful to the *mind* (and especially to *ingenuous spirits*, which have a quicker sense of *ill usage*) as *bitter* things generally are to the *palate*.’

THE same divine writer has recommended, this *first* and *chief* ingredient in all *conjugal* duties, in several other passages, and enforced it by a variety of strong images. Husbands *love your wives, even as Christ loved the church* * [with *like purity, truth, and fervour*, though it may be impossible, in all, or in either of these, to arrive at *equal degrees of perfection*.] *Nourish and cherish* them, *even as the LORD the church*: [Protect their *persons*, and defend their *honour*, though with great inconvenience and damage to yourselves, and even at the hazard of your *lives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it* †.] Again, *Let every one of you, in particular, so love his wife, even as himself* ‡: *So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies* ||. This is a branch of *benevolence*, that, let the principle itself be ever so refined and sublime, can scarce ever, in fact, be wholly *disinterested*: *Self-love* is so intimately connected with it, and in a manner involved in it. It is therefore added, *He that loveth his wife, loveth himself*; and the contrary disposition is represented as quite savage and unnatural, *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh* §. So that, upon the principles laid down, and most solemnly inculcated, in the New Testament, he that never

* Eph. v. 25.

† Ver. 24, 25.

‡ Ver. 33.

§ Ver. 28.

§ Ver. 28, 29.

truly loved his wife, or rises no higher, at best, than to a general cold regard, and slight affection, over-balanced by a much greater degree of indifference, has voluntarily entered into a *relation*, without so much as endeavouring to *qualify* himself, for discharging its principal and most important *duties*. And the husband who suffers himself to contract a groundless aversion to her, and hates her without a cause, ceases to be a *Christian*; and is fallen below the sentiments of *humanity*, professed and acknowledged in all nations: Or, to use the language of St. Paul upon another occasion, he *hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel**.

‘THIS, perhaps, will be thought, from the too general custom now established, for the mutual commerce, and decent behaviour, of the sexes towards each other, *impossible* to be admitted into the *polite* world.’ However, without being discouraged by this, or any other popular motive, I shall endeavour to shew, that the *Christian* directions above cited, relating to *conjugal love*, though *strict* indeed, and *generous* to a high degree, if compared with the *examples* that may occur in real life, are no more than a *finished copy* of the original rule, and institution of *nature* itself.

AND this may be made to appear, in an evident and undeniable light, from various topics—As, in the FIRST place, from hence, ‘That the marriage state is, and must be in itself, the closest bond of *union*, and a state of the most entire and indissoluble *friendship*, that can subsist among mankind.’ This, I say, it must be in *itself*, and not by means of ideas arbitrarily, and from mere custom, annexed to it. For can nature possibly

* 1 Tim. v. 8.

direct to any friendship more *perfect*, than where there is an inseparable interest, and even communion in all concerns? When other friendships are most extraordinary, and strained to the very highest pitch, that the laws of mutual society between *all* mankind will allow of, they can only *emulate*, but never *equal*, the ties and obligations of the marriage state; because in the latter all interests are necessarily *invariable*, and cannot, even in thought and just reflection, be *separated*: In the other, the obligation does not directly spring from *nature*, but is, in a great measure, *arbitrary*, and *artificial*. ‘It is by *imagination* only, that I can make the wife, the children, the whole family of my *friend*, my *own*: And, in acting upon this scheme, I may perhaps transgress other branches of my duty, more properly *immediate* and *relative*.’ But, between husbands and wives, there is an entire communion of *persons*, *substance*, *children*, *servants*. The loss, to the *one*, is equally that of the *other*, in all these instances.

LET us, therefore, but admit this plain principle, ‘that where *nature* has constituted the most strict and indissoluble *union*, it likewise intended, that there should be the completest and tenderest *friendship*;

and it will from hence unavoidably follow, that the matrimonial relation is, in the reason of things, the *closest* tie of friendship, and requires the most *sincere* and *cordial* affection, that human nature is capable of expressing. The bond of, what more strictly is stiled, friendship is much *inferior* to it. Virtuous friendship is founded in love, in a degree transcendent to the general love of mankind. The love, therefore, of *husbands* and *wives* being superior even to *that* (which in its highest exertions, if it regularly follows nature, can be no more than a *transcript* of it) it must be the first and strongest of all human affections towards
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individuals, and can have nothing above and beyond it, but the principle of *universal benevolence*.

AGAIN, this article of the *husband's* duty is enforced, by the *expectations* of the wife, her *natural* and *just* expectations. ' By adding the terms, natural and just expectations, I intend to express my sense, not of what *actually* is the case, but of what it *ought to be*. There are certain *views* in marriage, which *nature* prescribes ; and these are all proper to be consulted, in order to the fixing, what are the general and stated *duties* of the marriage state. Persons may enter into this relation, merely for a *maintenance* ; or for superfluous outward *state*, *splendor*, and *ostentation* ; but the whole of this is a vile *prostitution* of the order of nature, and the positive institution of God. If wives *contract* themselves to their husbands, upon the plan of *reason*, they do, and must *stipulate*—in exchange for the surrender of their *persons*, their *fortunes*, and, as a recompence for their domestic *cares* and *employments*—for the returns of *tender affection*, and of all *kind* and *obliging offices* : The failure in these therefore, on the *husband's* part, must be a gross act of *injustice*.

FURTHER, the *affections* of the wife are generally, from the complexion of her sex, more easily engaged, more warm and sensible ; she will, therefore, more strongly resent every mark of *indifference*, and *alienation* of *affection*—Her cares, in mere *domestic* life, are the hardest and most ungrateful—her *pains* the greatest, not only in the birth of children, but in the anxieties and sufferings antecedent to their birth—She sustains the most *troublesome part*, in training them up to mature and ripened life ; the whole, before they are capable of expressing, rationally, any marks of *obsequious gratitude*, or *good disposition*, to compensate

penſate for her conſtant attendance, and wakeful ſollicitude. And, therefore, for the husband to deny her the comfort of a moſt cordial *love*, and benevolent indearing *ſympathy*, under theſe peculiar cares, muſt be to the laſt degree unnatural.

ADD to this, that her ſituation and character oblige her to a ſtate of cloſer *confinement*: And ſtronger marks of *affection* are neceſſary, to ſweeten this comparative *ſolitude*, to encourage her to give a chearful and conſtant attendance to all *family* concerns; ‘and prevent, for want of her finding a ſuitable relief *at home*, her ſeeking after *foreign* amuſements of pleaſure and vanity; which are of a *contagious* nature, and will ſoon grow into ſettled habits of luxury and extravagance.’

IN the LAST place, the matrimonial relation having been proved to be *inviolable* (where no *extraordinary offence*, or *juſt cauſe* of its diſſolution is given) but by the *death* of one of the contracting parties; the neceſſity of a mutual ſincere *affection*, and eſpecially on the ſide of the *husband*, the chief perſon engaged, muſt from hence undeniably appear: Becauſe nothing elſe can render, ſuch a ſtrict and indiffolvable union, in any degree *tolerable*. The company of perſons, *indifferent* to each other, ſoon becomes *diſtaſteful*; if they are tied down to it without *redreſs*, they conſider it as a chain, and clog upon their liberty. This *reciprocal love* would not only *sweeten*, but convert into the moſt deſireable *privilege* and *bleſſing* of ſocial life. But a dull, formal, affected *civility* can never remove the *diſguſts*, the grievous *anxieties*, and *averſions*, that will attend it: Nor can even the bare *dry decorum* of outward civility be long maintained, where there is no mutual eſteem and affection. So that *reaſon*, *prudence*, *intereſt*, all conſpire in recommending that part of the *husband's* duty, which I
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am now considering; since neither order, nor family discipline, nor even his own satisfaction and peace of mind, can long *subsist* without it.

But, here, it may be proper for me to observe, that the *love* of *husbands*, to their wives, cannot imply in it, the indulging them in any singular *humours*, and odd starts of *fancy*, which have no foundation in reason, but spring from mere capriciousness of temper, ‘because such *singularities*, as these, are not only a disparagement to their *understandings*, but render them really *unamiable*.’ As there are very few men in the world, of any reflection or solid thought, that would be induced to love a woman at first, if she appeared to be of so fantastic a temper, liable to *unaccountable*, and, of consequence, *endless varieties*: So if it has been artfully *concealed* before marriage, the *discovery* of it, afterwards, can never be a natural mean either to *preserve*, or *increase*, love; but has a direct tendency to *lessen* it, if not to *extinguish* it altogether. And if husbands voluntarily allow their wives in any *extravagancies*, beyond their fortunes, which *luxury*, or *vanity*, may demand, this, also, is rather a mark of *hatred*, than of a true and genuine *affection*; because it must involve their *children*, for whom they have a *common* concern, and, in the end, the *wife herself* in infamy and ruin.

THERE is *no wife*, however *infected* with views and schemes of this kind, but what would be apt to reproach her *husband*, in the miserable event of things, with his too *tame* condescension and compliance. She would exclaim, with most bitter *invectives*, against any *indifferent* man, who should thus contribute to the distress of her family. And can she herself *consent*, to act the very *same* part? Can she *attempt* to draw in her husband, to

be an *accessary*, to the utter extirpation of honour and natural affection, in both? This is quite unaccountable: And the *refusing*, to gratify such unreasonable demands, is so far from being repugnant to the most cordial and tender *affection*, that it is, rather, the clearest *demonstration* of it.

BUT the real *contrarities* to love are — ‘ill language, a *churlish morose behaviour*, *public insult*, *opposing reasonable desires*, *keeping an unnatural distance*, and *not endeavouring*, to the utmost of our ability, to mitigate the wife’s griefs, and promote her happiness.’ And if, by her *inexcusable* and *dishonest* conduct, she renders herself utterly *unamiable*; even in this case, where there neither is, nor can be, a mutual *complacency*, there should still remain strong, in the husband’s heart, a love of *benevolence*; inclining him most ardently to *wish for*, and use the kindest, gentlest, and most effectual methods to *procure*, ‘her *amendment*, and re-establishment in the paths of *virtue* and *honour*.’

THUS have I largely considered the first general branch of the duty of *husbands*, towards their wives, and have shewn that *Christianity* strongly recommends and enforces it, as a tie indispensable; and that it has a plain foundation in *nature*; that *reason*, *humanity*, *prudence*, *interest*, all concur in pleading for it, as one of the first and most important of all human social obligations; and that neither *order*, nor *family discipline*, nor *peace* and *harmony* between the parties contracted for life, nor any of the *duties* of the *married* state, can possibly subsist without it. I have, likewise, particularly explained what is *not* implied in it; wherein it *really* consists; its proper *effects*; its *excesses*; its *contrarities*.

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AND the general reflection, that naturally occurs to the mind upon the whole, is this——‘ That if *sincere love* be an essential part of the *husband’s* duty, it must also be absolutely necessary, and a duty equally incumbent on him, to take care on what *principles*, and with what *views*, he enters into that strict relation ; from the just idea of which, an union of *hearts*, a mutual communication of *joys* and *sorrows*, and the most refined and constant *friendship* are, in reason, for ever inseparable.’ If the considerations, on which marriage is contracted, are such, as, in the nature of things, can neither beget, nor preserve, nor improve love, they must be repugnant to the very *design* of the *institution* itself, and inconsistent with its fundamental *duties*. If *not to be* an affectionate husband be (unless in some extraordinary and excepted cases already mentioned, where the thing is in itself next to *impossible*) both unchristian, and unnatural, and an infringement of the most sacred laws both of religion, and social morality ; for a man, as it were voluntarily, to put it *out of his power* to be truly affectionate, by engaging heedlessly, or on fordid, sensual, fantastic principles, in an affair of the most serious consequence to mutual *fidelity*, and mutual *comfort*, must be in a high degree inexcusable.

INDEED even marriages, that *sprang*, at first, from a real tender mutual love, are too often *dishonoured*, and rendered extremely *unhappy*, by coldness, want of confidence, and alienation of affection. But this, in many cases, may neither proceed directly from a mischievous unbenevolent temper, nor a deliberate wrong choice ; but rather from *neglect* and *indolence*. The abatement of reciprocal tenderness might not be a consequence *intended*, or *foreseen*. Nay, perhaps, had it appeared *probable*, that this

would be the melancholy *event* of singular difagreeable humours, or an imprudent careless conduct; both sides might have been *alarmed*, and have *guarded*, more cautiously, against all occasions of offence. But when a man assumes the character of a *husband*, with a *dislike* and *aversion* to his wife, contracted *before marriage*, this is a scene of premeditated and wilful guilt, that can admit of no alleviations. The first, though their indifference can by no means be justified, deserve a great share of our *pity*, at the same time that they rightly incur our *censure*: The last is intitled to no other compassion, than what may be claimed by *perverse offenders of all kinds*, in proportion to the difference of their guilt; even from the most humane and generous dispositions; who have the quickest and deepest *feelings* of the errors, and misfortunes, of their fellow creatures.

ALL this, it may be thought, is very reasonable to be allowed in general; but it is not sufficient to prevent the evils complained of: Are there not then some *particular rules*, that are proper to direct our conduct, in this greatest and highest concern of human life? Without doubt there *are*: Rules obvious to the understanding, easy to be followed, and that are confirmed to be, wise and good rules, by the experience of all mankind. How then comes it to pass, that they are *not known*? If they are, *really*, not known, it must be owing to gross thoughtlessness and inattention. The question, I think, should rather be, how it happens that they are so little *observed*; so generally, so fatally, *neglected*? The true answer to which is, because men are swayed by *proud* passions, and the *base degenerate* views of avarice and luxury, instead of being observant of the law of reason: These, I say, are their prime influencing *principles*, in that solemn contract and alliance, on which their honour, and some
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of the chief felicities of social life depend. To mention, briefly, a few particulars.

AND I think, in the FIRST place, ‘the most *debased* and *groveling* view of all is, that which regards *merely*, and is *wholly* centered in the *fortune* of the wife.’ It must indeed be owned, that easy and plentiful circumstances of life are very desirable, as they may be made subservient to the most generous and exalted purposes of *benevolence*. They must, also, greatly relieve *domestic cares*, and prevent numberless *perplexities* and *inquietudes*; which *spoil* the *temper*, oftentimes, to such a degree, as rises, in the end, to a fullen and inveterate habit of *ill-nature*. ‘Or, if the spirit is naturally of a different turn, they, first, beget *discontent* and *impatience*; *impatience*, *peevishness*; *peevishness*, *passion*; *passion*, *insult*; *insult*, *returns* of abuse and ill-treatment: Till peace is utterly banished, and *discord*, with the *furies*, enter and take possession.’ Wealth and affluence, therefore, with a wife, who has the *other qualities* necessary to raise esteem, and preserve love, is a very good *concomitant*; where there are discretion and judgment to make a *right use* of it, and a temper to bear it.

BUT when it is the *sole motive*, to the entering into this holy and sublime relation, by which *souls*, as well as *worldly substance*, are or ought to be united; it becomes an instrument of vice, and is, in its effects, detestable. ‘For is it possible, that a wife and good man should avoid being shocked at the thought, of converting, even in marriage, his *pure* and *chaste affection* for his wife, into a kind of *adulterous passion* for money? He, upon this supposition, is in reality wedded, not to the *person*,
with

with whom, to outward appearance, he has made a solemn and deliberate contract, but to *mammon*, the *God of this world*; who hath so *blinded* his eyes, as to make him insensible to all the ties of social truth, and honour, and resolve the whole of discretion, and manly obligation, into self-interest. The only passion, which he *felt*, has attained its *object*, and its *end*, without any relation at all to the *person*, or *qualification*, of the wife; and has, therefore, not the least connection, with the true esteem and love of the wife, any more than it has, with any possible method of *raising an estate*, whether with honour, or infamy. *Women* therefore have the highest reason, in the first place, to despise, and shun, these mercenary, unnatural, and impious *adulterers* (this is entirely the stile of Scripture——for *know ye not, ye adulterers and adulteresses*, says St. *James*, *that the friendship of the world is enmity with GOD* *.) These, I say, should be the *first* objects of their contempt and abhorrence, since being sunk to the *lowest* state of human souls, centering their *passion* in unanimated earth, in a concern where *sincere*, *rational*, and *social* delights are proposed to their choice, and being, upon that account, scarce capable of sensations *moral* and *refined*; their wives are so far from having any reason to expect, from them, an *affection* suited to the conjugal state, that they can, scarce, with safety depend, on the bare grateful returns of honourable *support* and *decency*.

LET me only add, that as covetousness is, in the holy Scriptures, by an elegant figure represented as *idolatry*, these *avaricious marriages* answer, in the same way of figurative description, to the very *worst* and most *unnatural* kind of idolatries, ever prac-

* James iv. 4.

tified in the heathen world ; viz. ‘ that of *human sacrifices*, devoted, in the stile of the superstitious *Gentiles*, to the *God* or *Demon* of avarice.’

‘ ANOTHER too common reason, of entering into marriages, is, the *gaiety* and *sprightlinefs*, and, according to the outward fashion prevailing, the *genteel* and *polite* behaviour of the wife ; I say polite, according to *outward fashion*, because the *true polishings* both of *male* and *female*, are measured by a more certain invariable standard.’ The *counterfeit*, the *false*, politeness has no other rule, but fancy, custom, vanity ; things unaccountably and infinitely various. And I call this a *too common* reason, because it is utterly incapable, from the very nature of it, of producing a rational and constant affection.

CHEARFULNESS, and a lively agreeable humour, corrected by *discretion* and *modesty*, are, without doubt, agreeable qualities in a *companion*, in a *friend*, and, most of all, in a *faithful inseparable* associate for *life* : But *gaiety* may be *want* of *thought*, mere insipid *folly* and *impertinence*. It is either *agreeable*, or quite *nauseous* and *intolerable*, as the temper varies. The *husband* may grow more *grave* and *sedate*, or the wife less *lively* ; and, in both these cases, all her *merit* ceases. If this be the *sole* foundation of conjugal love, the *cause* is entirely removed, and the *effect* must necessarily follow. And what is imaginary *politeness*, as the *ground* of a stable and permanent affection, if my notion, whether from *reason*, or *fancy*, happens to alter ? The whole of this, therefore, is no more to be depended on, for the regular discharge of the *moral* and *Christian* obligations of husbands and wives (without which marriage must be an eternal infelicity) than even the *love* of *money*, as the sole and ultimate object.

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Let *men*, therefore, carefully avoid being entangled in this dangerous *snare*, which may soon be turned into a scene of *reluctance* and *aversion*: And *women* too, as the rank which they will then hold, in the esteem of their *husbands*, being merely imaginary, may, by an unexpected and unforeseen shock given to their *imagination*s, be exchanged for disregard and contempt.

‘BUT suppose we are induced to marry, for the agreeable outward *beauties* of the person, with whom we enter into this solemn contract: Is this a *probable* means, to persuade us to discharge the *duties* of the married state, *as long* as the engagement itself continues?’ Of *itself*, and unsupported by *other* qualifications, it is not: Reason and experience demonstrate, sensibly, that *it is not*. It may inspire a *passion*, but it cannot, *alone*, preserve a *constant affection*: Because beauty (let not the fair be immoderately *vain*) may be impaired, and quite lost, in *distemper*, before its natural season of *eclipse*. If it should escape that, it will be obscured, and fade, through advancing *age*. The *love*, therefore, that is built on this foundation alone, cannot be, like the true matrimonial affection, *stable* and *never-ceasing*; but must be subject to *declines*, to *inconstancies*, to a *total cessation*. Let *men*, therefore, if they intend to approve themselves to *conscience*, and to *GOD*, beware how they embark on this *single* bottom; and *women*, however admired and flattered, lay in a stock of other *qualities*, that are more *substantial*, and less liable to *change*. Grace and loveliness of *person*, where there are amiable dispositions of *mind*, gives them a more pleasing lustre and dignity; but, without *these*, it has no real value, either in reason, or in the common, sedate, final judgment of mankind. But piety, virtue, good nature, discretion, diligence in domestic offices, condescension and modesty, the *peculiar ornaments* of the female sex,

sex, to which they are *appointed* by nature, and by the great former of nature, will, where there is a common share of *sense* and *humanity* in *husbands*, maintain an *eternal* love, and all the offices of indulgent and tender *care*, connected with it. Brutes and savages, in nature, may *deviate* from this; but all the considerate, and worthy, part of mankind, will *adhere* inflexibly to it.

‘THE next branch, of the husband’s duty, is *fidelity*.’ This, as all the other parts, may in reason be reduced under the general head of *love*, already treated of. But all are not equally, and the greatest part are very little, capable, of tracing *consequences*, and deriving *obligations* from *one single principle*, in which they are virtually included. It must therefore be of use, in this, as well as in all instances of social duty, to express, and mark out minutely, the *several parts*.

To this branch of the *husband’s* duty, *fidelity* to the wife, stands chiefly opposed the crime of *adultery*. This is not barely a *violation*, but an *entire dissolution* of the important marriage bond; upon which the *happiness* of mankind, their most *refined* and *elegant pleasures*, and their *surest relief* from care and anxiety (all confined within the bounds of *innocence* and strict *honour*) more immediately and necessarily depend, than on any other public and social obligation: Without which, the rational and moral human species could be retained within no rules of *order*, becoming their nature, no *decency*; but a variable, unsettled, roving *appetite* would, soon, gain the transcendency over *reason*, and introduce confusion every where: And which was, therefore, rendered *holy* and *honourable*, by a particular *sanction* of the universal Creator, who foresaw all the *probabilities* of things; as it had been originally declared *inviolable*, in the constitution of

nature itself; and has been proclaimed since, and transmitted down from age to age, as an *immutable law*, by the constant and wonderful *equality* maintained in the number of the different sexes; allowing only for probable *decreases*, to which *one* of them is particularly subject, in the course of human affairs.

AGAIN, the same crime, that thus opposes the first dictate of nature, defies the first institution of Almighty God, and the established rules of almost all wise societies, is, also, an injury to our neighbour in those *rights*, of which he is most *jealous*, and in one of the most *valuable* branches of his *property*; frequently more dear to him, and more tenderly cherished, than *ease*, *plenty*, *honour*, and even *life* itself. 'The *adulterer*, therefore, may the instrument of much more exquisite and lasting misery to the person, whom he injures, than it is possible, in many instances, even for the *murderer* to occasion.' Where the affection, on the side of the party *injured*, has been sincere and ardent, he infixes a wound, that preys upon the *inward constitution* of the mind, and renders it habitually *dejected* and *inconsoleable*, by alienating the love and tenderness of the *violated* object from the person that deserves, and has the only claim to it, and places the chief part of his present and temporary felicity in it; who not only smarts, and is deeply afflicted, through a sense of *his own sufferings*, but for the *prostitution* and *infamy* of perverted innocence, the *softener* of all his inquietudes. So that the vice, which I am now arguing against, disclaims, and utterly renounces, all *humanity*, as well as justice; and must, therefore, be ranked amongst the most detestable excesses of *inordinate desire*, and worse than *brutish intemperance*.

ADD to all this, that it sows the seeds of implacable animosity and dissent between *families*; and scarce from any crime, have resulted more direful and tragical effects to *societies* in general, as well as to *individuals*. And we can hardly suppose, that a crime of such uncommon turpitude, where the *iniquity*, the *treachery*, the *violence*, are marked out in such glaring colours, and the pernicious *effects* of which are so easy to be discerned, can be *unknown* to any man, who has the internal faculties of a man, and makes the least use of his Reason. It has therefore been stigmatized, as an act of horror and infamy, in all *civilized* nations, and as far, almost, as *humanity* itself extends. It was a *capital offence* under the *Mosaic* oeconomy; and has been adjudged worthy of *death* by the laws of many other nations; and, I think, ought to share the same fate, under all equitable constitutions of civil government.

BUT besides the guilt and mischief of adultery *in general*, it has, on the side both of the *husband*, and the *wife*, its *peculiar* aggravations. Those, on the side of the *husband*, are——‘ That he *abuses*, and *violates* the *rights* of, the *weaker* and more *defenceless* party; whom he is directly appointed to *cherish* and *comfort*, and *protect* from all *insult*——that he arrogates to himself more *strength* of reason, and a greater *command* over his passions——that he is apt to *resent*, with the utmost violence, every *dishonour*, or *bare suspicion* of dishonour, done to *his own bed*——and that his bad example is most likely to *influence*, and spread the *contagion* among, *children* and *servants*, to the total corruption and depravation of their *manners*. But enough has been said on this head, especially as I have, on another occasion, published my thoughts more largely concerning it.

I THEREFORE beg leave just to mention another duty of the husband, which, though it be not commonly considered in that light, is, however, absolutely necessary to his fulfilling his part of the marriage *engagement*, and answering the great *design* of it. ‘What I intend is, the taking care of the *family substance*, in which the wife has a common *right*; that it be neither *reduced* by carelessness and mismanagement on the one hand, nor *squandered away* in excesses of sensuality, and luxury, on the other.’ For it can never be imagined, that any woman, in her senses, would voluntarily surrender herself up, so entirely, to the *power* and *will* of a husband, as that, whenever he pleased, he might throw all affairs into confusion, and reduce *her*, and her *children*, to want and misery. The very *nature* of the marriage *contract* itself, which was designed for *mutual* support and comfort, amounts to the same as a direct *stipulation* to the contrary: And especially, if the wife had a fortune of her own, on which she might have lived with *ease* and *independence*, and which was entrusted to the *husband’s* management, that he might *preserve* and *improve* it. In this case, I say, especially, the conduct, which I am now censuring, is not merely *indiscretion*, or *riot*, but a flagrant act of *infidelity*.

‘THE next branch of the *husbands* duty is, to *defend* his wife against injury to her *person*, insult to her *honour*, and, to the utmost of his power likewise, against wrong to her *character*, and unnecessary vexation and disquietude to her *mind*.’ For *her* person is, in a manner, his *own* person; *her* honour *his* honour; and *his* *peace* of mind *is*, or at least *should be*, inseparably connected with *hers*. And I have before observed, that St. Paul has urged this in such terms, as if he thought it an office so indispensably incumbent on the *husband*, that he ought to discharge it, though at the
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bazard of his *life*. Scarce any thing less can be implied in these words: Husbands *love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it* §.

‘AGAIN, *husbands* should always treat their wives with a becoming *respect*, a respect suited to their *rank*, and the *office* they bear in the family; that neither their *persons*, nor the *authority* with which they are by nature invested, may grow contemptible.’ Besides, women are more *sensible* of *neglects*, more *strict* and *nice* with respect to outward decencies, and points of honourable regard; and therefore will feel more strongly every *slight*, which they imagined is offered to them, as well as *resent* it more deeply. Upon which account, *St. Peter* seems to have recommended this conduct, both on the principles of *nature* and *Christianity*, in the following passage: *Likewise, ye husbands—give honour unto the wife, as to the weaker vessel; and as being heirs together of the grace of life* *.

‘MUTUAL *instruction*, likewise, as far as there are *abilities* and *opportunities* for it, is another branch of conjugal duty.’ But I have thought proper to introduce it, among the *husband’s* obligations, because *St. Paul* appears to have taken it for granted, that it would, in general, be an *office* more peculiarly belonging to *him*; when he says, in opposition to *womens* asking *questions*, and *disputing* publicly in religious assemblies: Let the wives *learn of their husbands at home* †. And as for the points of instruction, they are only—the plain essential principles of *true religion*, not topics for *wrangling*, and to feed a wild intemperate *zeal*, which are inconsistent with the *native modesty*, and utterly deface all the *graces*, of the *female sex*;—and the

§ Eph. v. 25.

* 1 Pet. iii. 7.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 35.

knowledge that will best subserve the purposes of *family order*, and *good oeconomy*, and support, at the same time that it adds a lustre to, the *social* and *domestic* virtues.

‘FURTHER, the *husband* is bound to allow *his* wife, a *decent* and *honourable* accommodation, according to their rank and circumstances.’ She has a right not only to all the *necessaries*, but to all the *conveniencies*, *comforts*, *ornaments* of person, &c. that are suited to her station and degree in life. And there are, I think, but two *limitations*, that can here be admitted. The first is, that what the wife requires must be *real* conveniencies, and *real* elegancies, and not the *excesses* of luxury and vanity; which *false taste*, the more it is *indulged*, is found, by experience, to be more and more *insatiable*. The other limitation is, that no such ostentation or expence can reasonably be *desired*, or reasonably *consented to*, as would hurt the interests of the family in general. ‘Within these bounds, it will have the air of *tyranny* to *deny*; beyond, it would be *cruelty* to *grant*.’

THE LAST thing, that I mentioned, was, the duty of *husbands* in not *separating* from their wives but for reasons, which virtually *dissolve* the contract itself, as being *inconsistent* with the very nature and end of it. ‘This I thought it necessary just to hint at, because though *divorces* are generally regulated in all well established societies, *separations* are not. And the *husband* has this step more in his power, as the common property is more immediately vested in *him*; and if he be of a singular or variable, of a proud or too resentful, temper, will, upon this very account, have stronger temptations to commit this *enor-mity*.’

BUT

BUT I chuse not to enlarge on this topic, because enough has been said by writers, who have treated of it more professedly, than falls within my general design; and that I may not be thought so invidious, by censoriousness and ill-nature, as to have in my view any *particular cases*.

C H A P. III.

Of the duties of the married state.

S E C T. II.

Of the duties of Wives.

TH E R E are scarce any of the branches of *Christian* morality, any of the particular duties of *social* life, so frequently, and strongly, inculcated in the New Testament, as those of married persons towards each other. And, for this, there is an obvious reason in the very nature of things; because there are but few duties, that are of equal importance, for the establishment of universal harmony and benevolence, and, of consequence, to the well being of mankind in general. And, besides, the experience of all times concurs, in attesting this as an undoubted, though a most melancholy, truth, *viz.* that these offices (which are, indeed, of most sacred and eternal obligation, and indispensable parts of all true religion) are too commonly regarded as things, but slightly, and more remotely, connected with the essentials of virtue, and especially with a *religious* character — And even many good Christians (as they would fain persuade themselves to think they are) neither condemn *their own* conduct, nor censure that of *others*, with half the severity, for being *stern, morose, tyrannical* husbands, or *profuse, stubborn, untractable* wives, as for offences of much *inferior* guilt; or, perhaps,

haps, for *mere failures* with respect to outward forms of piety, and the rigors and excesses of party zeal.

THE persons, more immediately *concerned*, seem often to have as little, nay, perhaps much less, considered the duties that properly belong to their character, and which result from the most strict and inviolable of all human relations, than many, who are quite *disengaged*; to whom they are *distant* and *future*, or, at most, but *probable* ties. They are apt likewise, on *both* sides, to be chiefly intent on observing, how the *other* contracting party discharges its peculiar obligations; every *neglect* here, their partiality and pride *aggravate*, and represent as *unpardonable*, as want of virtue and decency, heinous abuse and insult: As if they were united together, in marriage, to *spy out* faults, but not to *amend* them; to vent their spleen and dissatisfaction, in *reproaching* each other for *breaches* of their duty, but neither to *practice* it; neither to endeavour to remove the *ground* of these mutual upbraidings, by acting as becomes their character, and the part which they severally sustain.

ANOTHER thing, which I have often observed with great concern, as a sure mark of the decline of the *Christian* religion, and even of *manly* virtue and reflection, in the present times, is, that points of *morality*, of the utmost moment, are considered and treated by the generality, as subjects of mere *amusement* and *curiosity*. And the more important the duties are, and, especially, if they are any way of a *nice* and *singular* kind, or but *rarely* discussed, the stronger are the *workings* of this *fatal habit* of vain curiosity; the greater *ascendency* does it gain over the mind; the more does it *captivate* and *enslave* it; till, by degrees, it grows to be the *chief* principle that directs its views, and suspends, if it does not

utterly destroy, the impressiion of every *juster* and more *ingenuous* motive.

AND this is no more, than what we find, by experience, to be the present course of nature, in all other parallel cases, with respect, I mean, to *wrong* habits, and passions indulged to *excess*; where the *stronger* is always getting head, and extending its incroachments upon the *weaker* principle, till the latter is wholly swallowed up, and centered in it. The application of this remark is very easy to be made, to the particular subject, which I am now explaining: And the necessity of restraining this *idle trifling* temper, and being governed by more *rational* and *worthy* views (if we would either improve in the knowledge of our duty, or find ourselves properly disposed, upon all occasions, to practise it) must be obvious to every common understanding.

BUT there are other bad dispositions (which I think it proper just to mention, now I have proceeded so far upon this subject) that are obstacles in the way of our receiving instruction, of our acquiring just notions of the principles, and fulfilling the obligations, especially of *relative* and *social* duties: And the two chief of these are, *levity*, and *pride*. That impertinent and vain curiosity, which I have already cautioned against, springs perhaps, generally, from levity of mind; and these evils can seldom be said to differ, any otherwise than as *cause* and *effect*. However, as levity not only may be, but doubtless is, the occasion of other excesses equally mischievous, it deserves, upon this account, to be distinctly considered; and chiefly as it is a *growing* vice, and sprung up to an uncommon height of *public indecency*.

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MAN, on account of the rank of his nature, the state in which he is placed, and the views, with which he is inspired, by the eternal Father of all intelligent and moral creatures, must certainly be, considered in himself, an *important, grave, serious* being. For him, therefore, to be habitually thoughtless and inconsiderate, is in fact to be entirely *irrational*: To go round in a mere circle of *animal* life, and have scarce any higher prospects, than what brutes are by mere instinct impelled to, is to renounce his natural claim of *immortality*.

BUT the dictates of *levity* are quite the reverse of all this, *viz.* to disguise, disfigure, and incumber the *outward form* of man, that the *body* itself may appear as the *tenement* of a *spirit*, void of *thought* and *dignity*, and to banish all *appearance* of consideration. ‘And are such persons as these, who use their utmost pains to forget that they are *men*, fit for any *trust*, for sustaining any honourable or important *relation* in life? For being *husbands, fathers, heads of families*—without a sense, or taste, of things that are *decent* and *right*? Neither sex, with this lightness and frothiness of mind, are *duly prepared* to enter into the married state; and both the considerate and conscientious husband, and the discreet virtuous wife, that are unhappily *yoked* with such *contrarieties*, have, I think, *probable* shame, anxiety, and misery, *direct* and *full* in their view.’

BUT levity of mind is *not more* a hinderance, to *husbands* and *wives* weighing rightly their peculiar duties, and the motives, that urge to an invariable observation of them, than *pride*; which is deaf to all admonitions, and hardened against all remonstrances, with respect to *defects* of every kind—against

those of a *moral* nature, in a particular manner, where there is a desire to be *thought* virtuous——‘ and against those which regard *omissions* of *relative* duties chiefly; because the character is thereby, as it were, brought into a *comparison*, and there is an occasion afforded, by means of a *reciprocal* tie, for *emulation*, and a pretence to *superiority*.’

PRIDE, as its first and most natural off-spring, begets partiality; *partiality* too high an opinion of our own merit; in consequence of which, ‘ it aggravates *our expectations* and *claims*, especially from those, who, by reason of a more near and close conjunction of concerns and interests, have *claims of right*, *likewise*, from *us*.’ In proportion as our own expectations are *raised*, above truth and justice, their rights must, in our opinion, be *diminished*. And hence it comes to pass, that both are dissatisfied, not if *the case* be not *fairly* stated, but if their irregular *prepossessions* are not fully gratified. They exact, with *rigour*, what they imagine to be owing from the other party; but each are *scrupulous* and *remiss*, and plead strongly for *abatements*, in what is due from themselves. Nay further, besides *personal* pride, ‘ there is a pride of *sex*, of *characters*, and *distinct relations*; which makes *husbands* and *wives* equally presume, that they should be peculiarly *favoured*.’ And as all this is *now*, in a great measure, and has been, in *ages past*, the actual state of things, and the same is likely to happen, in a greater or less degree, in *all times to come*; there was the highest reason, why *Christianity* should, so particularly, and earnestly, urge the duties of the *married* state (as long as the *relation itself* can, reasonably, be said, to continue in its *full force*) as immutable dictates of nature, and irreversible ordinance of heaven.

I BEG leave only to subjoin one other introductory remark, tending to the more complete illustration of the subject before us; and that is, that there is something very observable in the *manner*, in which the New Testament states the reciprocal duties of *husbands* and *wives*, as well as in the *copiousness* and *strength*, with which they are recommended and enforced. St. Paul, in explaining the duty of the *husband*, insists chiefly on *love* and its *attendant offices*. The affection which he urges is *refined, tender, generous, fervent, constant*. This he has set in a variety of lights; which describe, at the same time, its transcendent degree, and its perpetual obligation, derived from *nature*, and the express *laws* of GOD.

AND the reasons of this are plain——‘because generally, perhaps, the affections of *men* are not so *easily* and *strongly* engaged, as those of the *other sex*;’ and, if they do not enter into marriages merely from prudence, and worldly considerations, are sooner apt to *decline*, and sink from their first height and ardor, into a more *indifferent* and *cool regard*: And because, while there is a cordial and lively *affection* in the husband, all the *other parts* of his conjugal duty will follow of course; *viz. fidelity; protection, respect, honourable maintenance, and inviolable union*. He will find no disposition, in himself, to *stretch* his authority to an *undue excess*; but prefer, to the haughtiness and arrogance of a *master*, the more equal rank, and endearing character of a *friend*.’

BUT, on the other hand, when the same apostle sets, before us, a summary of the duty of *wives*, *love* is not distinctly mentioned in it; and seldom, I think, if at all, in terms, inculcated, in any passage of the New Testament; though it be a tie
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of nature unalterable and ever binding on the *wife*, as much as on the *husband*. And why, then, it will be asked, is this *difference* made? Will not all the parts of conjugal duty, on the side of the *wife*, spring as naturally from love, as in the case already mentioned? *Fidelity* here, as in the other instance, and *soft ingenuous manners*, will, most certainly, flow from it—I allow all this; and that the only just principle, of the rational and cheerful *submission* of the wife, is *love*. ‘But *submission*, notwithstanding, is enforced, as the capital and leading article of the *duty* of *wives*, on very substantial grounds—Not so much, as it is the *root* of all others, but as the *foundation*, on which *objections* and *difficulties* may arise, and *breaches* of mutual affection.’

IN the point of *love*, as was hinted before, *women* are not so liable to fail. ‘As a *passion*, it is, in their breasts, more intense and deeply riveted; and whether with *reason*, or as a *mere impulse*, longer retained. It will stand the shock of many *lesser indignities*; and, oftentimes, even *violence* and *outrage* itself, unless repeated and continued beyond all human sufferance, will not be able *entirely* to *quell* it. This may be a *weakness*, and a *fond transport*, beyond the strict rule of *nature*, but it is much more eligible, and unspeakably less pernicious in its consequences, than a *mutable* and *transient* affection; because the fondness, while it continues, will be as *studious* to *oblige*, and as *effectual* to preserve *peace* and *harmony* in families, and *assiduity* and *zeal* in all *domestic services*, as the most correct and discreetly regulated love.’

To what has been already offered, concerning the indiscreet and too eager contentions, that are likely to commence (and, in persons of little knowledge, sense of *Christian* duty, or of unquiet

quiet tempers, do precipitately and fatally commence) on the topics of the husbands *authority*, and the wives *obedience*, I have this farther to add: That as the point, in which the *husband* is most likely to grow remiss, is that of an equal unabating *love*; so the most dangerous *temptation*, on the side of the *wife*, is to question, to restrain, and at length utterly to annul, her own natural and indispensable duty of *submission*, though it be still, in *words*, acknowledged.

THE affair of *subjection*, as we see by constant experience, is irksome and grievous to *both sexes*; who are not only fond, against the wise ordinance of nature, of an universal equality, or, at least, each of being brought upon a *level* with all others, that are *nearest* their own situation and rank in life, but aspire, through vanity, and immoderate self flattery, to a *prebeminence*. Men and women, both, indulge this *filly* and *unnatural* affectation. I call it *unnatural*, because it must be the confusion of all order, and the entire dissolution of human society; and because it is a *romantic* scheme, impossible to take *effect*; and *foolish*, because it is both *unnatural* and *impossible*. But such, however, is the fact. To press *submission*, therefore, as the chief duty of the *subordinate* part, and *love*, to temper the authority and rigour of the *superior*, must be proper in all *moral* systems, and especially in institutes of *Divine* morality.

AFTER this preliminary introduction, to *soften* the first branch of the duty of *wives*, *viz.* submission, I proceed to discourse more largely on *that*, and on the other parts of her duty—which are *love*, *fidelity*, *prudence*, *frugality*, *meekness*, and *modesty*. Many of these appear, on the first proposal, to be most lovely and attractive virtues, calculated for rendering the sex peculiarly *amiable*;

able; and for gaining it an equal, in fact a *superior*, influence, to any mere investiture of *natural* authority.

THE first head then, of the duty of *wives*, which remains to be still farther considered and explained, is *submission*. I call it the *first*, because, as, we have already seen, it is, in the *partition* of conjugal duties, the branch *peculiarly* assigned to them; and what St. Paul has fixed upon (as it is usual in Scripture, to make choice of *one cardinal* point of religion and virtue, to denote the *whole*) as the great article, by which the *character* of the wife will be determined.

BUT give me leave to observe, together with this, that the same Apostle, in his epistle to the *Ephesians*, introduces *this* injunction, which to many, who are not enough acquainted with the wise constitution of the GOD of nature, carries with it a harsh and discouraging aspect, with most excellent and engaging address; by inculcating, immediately before it, ‘the *universal* submission of mankind to each other.’ *Submit yourselves*, says he, *one to another, in the fear of GOD*: And then directly follows, *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the LORD* *. A subjection, in many offices of life, is the duty of *all* without exception; since all mankind are held together, by their *inseparable* interests, and *common* state of dependence upon each other. ‘The *submission*, in *all* instances, is no *other*, no *more*, than what reason, and the positive law of GOD direct to; it is equally *wise*, equally *necessary*, equally *subservient*, to the *universal* good; and, in proportion to their rank, and the expectations they can justly form, to the good of *every particular member* of the whole.’

* Eph. v. 21, 22.

AND it is not at all unlikely, that a state of *superiority* may, frequently, have more inconveniencies, and mortifications, attending it (especially, where there is the *pride* of superior rank and power) than even a state of subjection. This must certainly be the case, if the *inferior* has taken any care, to cultivate the habits of *moderation* and *humility*, that are best suited and adapted to his circumstances.—To comply, where there are strong temptations to *arrogance* and *tyranny*, may be vastly more difficult in numberless cases, than to submit, where *nature* plainly intended submission, to be one of its settled *laws*; where there, generally, are not the proper *talents*, for the exercise of *authority*; and it would deprive, even the *aspiring* person, of that *protection* and *defence*, which are necessary for its convenient, and honourable, subsistence in life.

IF it be asked, what are the *measures*, and *boundaries*, of conjugal submission: I answer, things *lawful*, *decent*, *modest*, *honourable*. ‘In the *contrary* to these, *wives* must be *at liberty* to dissent, and, if too closely pressed, to *refuse submission*; since the very *subjects* of *civil authority*, who are placed in a much *inferior* degree to them, are not only *authorised*, but it is their *duty*, to oppose the unreasonable and destructive schemes of arbitrary power.’ In all other cases, where the thing contested is neither *immoral*, *indecent*, *immodest*, nor *dishonourable*, the wife, if she cannot prevail by sober and calm remonstrances, is under an obligation to *yield*. Persuasion, and the utmost force of reason, she may justly make use of; but, if these are ineffectual, submission, for the good and order of the *whole*, is her wisely appointed *duty*.

LET me add here, though it has been just hinted at before, another motive, to corroborate and enforce the more general motives from religion and virtue, already suggested, *viz.* that the wife is much more likely to gain the *end*, which she herself aims at, by *submission*, than by a proud and unnatural *opposition*. If she is gentle and obliging, and, instead of appearing desirous of *power*, is wholly intent on offices of *love*, she may have an equal *rule* with the husband, in most cases; and will, in all probability, if we form our judgment upon common *experience*, have a degree of *transcendency*, which GOD and nature have not allotted to her. In this case, as well as in most others, has the wife author of the human constitution, inseparably connected the *duty*, and *interest*, of every individual, in the race of mankind.

THE next branch of the duty of *wives*, which, according to the order proposed, I am now to consider, is *love*; an undiffembled, chaste, generous, sympathizing, constant love. Love of a *friend* there may be, and of other particular *relations*, besides this; these are all distinct branches and offices of universal benevolence; but, in what is properly called *conjugal affection*, no object, but the *husband*, ought to have the *least share*. And *this*, of which we are now only speaking, may then be said to be *undiffembled*, when it is centered in him *alone*. The same is, likewise, one character of *chaste* love; as another is, that it springs from reason, friendship, virtue, the sublimest ties to *mutual affection*, and not from *passion*, and mere animal *impulse*. And if this be the case, it will be *tender* without growing *nauseous*; *generous* from its principles; *sympathizing* on the noblest ground of rational esteem, and complacency; and equally *constant*

stant in youth and age, in sickness and health, in plenty and indigence, and all the *revolutions*, and *varieties*, of outward condition——which reason and generous love are prepared to *encounter*.

AND that this belongs, indispensably, to the *duty of wives*, may be argued from all the general topics, by which I have, before, enforced the same branch of the husband's duty——*viz.* FIRST, The *nature* of the matrimonial *relation* as in reason, and by the express institution of GOD, a state of the most intimate union, the most perfect and exalted friendship: A *state*, in which children, servants, substance, persons, are, as it were, inseparably mixed and blended together. So that the love of the wife, and of the husband, are in a manner *self-love*, as properly as they are acts of benevolence; an aversion to the wife, or to the husband, the same as *self-aversion*, and an alienation of the heart from our own true interest.

BESIDES the obligation to *love*, in all cases of this kind, must necessarily imply, in it, an obligation to *mutual love*, and the wife must either be bound to *exercise*, and *cultivate*, soft and tender sentiments, with respect to her husband, or she cannot, upon any rules and measures of justice, expect the *returns* of affection from him. 'In truth, the *obligation* in her sex (if any *difference* can at all be made) is rather more explicitly, and strongly, enforced by *nature*; as she has, from her *very make*, peculiar dispositions, and incitements, to *kind* and *endearing* offices.'

ADD to this, that as the *wife* has some particular circumstances, attending her station, that require to be sweetened and

relieved, so has the *husband*. Her *pains* may be the greatest; but, as a ballance to that, perhaps, upon the whole, his *anxieties*. The *breeding*, and *nourishing*, the tender infant family; are *her* peculiar allotment; but the sollicitude of providing for their *maintenance*, for their *security*, *comfort*, and *honour*, in all future life, falls more immediately, within *his* province.

IN the execution of this *trust*, he is liable to numberless *disappointments* and *embarrassments*, unforeseen, and consequently unprovided for; he is obliged to watch carefully opportunities of *advantage*, to guard against occasions of *loss* and *detriment*, to repel *fraud*, to prevent being over reached by *cunning* and *avarice*, and obviate the ill effects of *indiscretion*, or of *confidence* *unfitly* reposed. He will probably meet with such *oppositions*, and have such *contrarieties* of temper to deal with, as may put his *patience* to its utmost proof; and, after all the efforts of his reason, and moderation, *irritate* and *ruffle* his mind. 'And from whence, in these cases, can his *relief* so surely, and effectually, spring, as from the obsequious, obliging, *endearments*, of a discreet and virtuous wife? And how much will his inward perturbation be increased, if, from wrath, abuse, and disappointment *abroad*, he retires, only to meet with the furies of *hatred*, *insolence*, and *contradiction* at home?'

IT must, therefore, be the duty of every wife, to try, by an *engaging address*, and an *afficious love*, to *mitigate* the husband's disquietudes, to *calm* his temper, and *allay* his passions; to receive him after *absence*, especially when there are visible appearances of his being uneasy, and discomposed, with testimonies of *peculiar respect* and *affection*; to be able, as far as lies in her power, to give him an *agreeable account* of *domestic* concerns, and

to enliven and raise him, by *pleasing discourse*; for which last, she should endeavour to qualify herself, to the utmost of her ability and circumstance, both by proper *reading* and *conversation*. This is the most likely means, to reduce him to a state of inward *serenity* and *peace*, and bind him down to eternal *love*, and *fidelity*.

THERE are other expressions of *conjugal* affection, on the part of the *wife*, which are, likewise, absolutely necessary—As the being *jealous* of her husband's *honour*, and studious to preserve it *clear* and *undiminished*; the being indulgent to his *failings*, and industrious to *conceal* them; the being careful of his *health* and *ease*, forward to *oblige*, and even to *anticipate* his just desires; to be a sharer in all his *griefs*, and a lively partaker of the joy of his *prosperity*.

I SHALL only add, that if husbands can, upon *good* grounds, *claim* this cordial and endearing love, from the persons, with whom they are linked together, in the first and strictest bond of nature and friendship; this necessarily implies in it, that they should endeavour to render themselves *just*, and *worthy*, objects of love. And this deserves, the rather, to be particularly remarked, because the ill conduct of the *husband* is *oftentimes* (I will not take upon me directly to say, that it is for *the most part*) the reason of indifference, and coldness, on the *other side*. Before *marriage*, women are flattered to an *extravagance*, and adored, almost, to a degree of *idolatry*: This is the *ridiculous* and *stupid* custom of the present age; which the *sensible part*, of the *female sex* themselves, must, one would think, despise and nauseate. But, however they may look upon it as an excess; they can never expect, while they believe that there is either *dis-*
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cretion, sincerity, or honour, in men, that it will sink, quite down, to the *contrary extreme*.

WHEN therefore they find, that, in a little time after their commencing *wives*, they are slighted, deserted, indifferently, or rudely, treated; that pretended esteem is succeeded by contempt, warm professions, of unalterable tenderness, exchanged for coldness and insult, and adoration for haughtiness and tyranny; can this be a *natural method* of keeping alive, and cherishing in their breasts, the *pure and gentle* spirit of *conjugal affection*? When the wife is forced to pass the greatest part of her time in solitude, and the husband brings home, with him, none but *sullen rugged* manners, or, at most, but a *distant, formal, constrained* respect; has not this a direct tendency, to produce like returns of *indifference* and *aversion*? It can scarce, in nature, be otherwise.

I now proceed to discourse of *fidelity*, another branch of conjugal duty, which is unalterably binding on both parties, from *nature*, and in consequence of a *voluntary mutual stipulation*. The *violation* of this duty, in the *first and chief* instance, I have already shewn to be an offence of most *heinous* and *aggravated* malignity, and attended with most *direful* and *pernicious* consequences. The *outrage*, and violent bold *defiance* of all *justice* and *honour*, are so obvious to the first undepraved sense of nature, that *adultery* is almost universally branded, with distinguished and peculiar infamy. Even the rude and untaught *Indian* blushes, and starts, at the thought of a crime, which some, pretending to a *refinement* of sentiment and manners, and even professing *Christianity*, are hardened enough to commit.

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NAY, many there are, who can, by no means, be suspected, of being too *strict* and *precise* in their regard to *moral rules*, and who are so far from being *over nice* and *delicate*, in the point of *chastity itself*, that they can indulge themselves without reserve, and without shame, in *other* branches of *incontinence*; many of these, I say, quite *unattached* to virtue, and the *votaries* of impurity and libertinism, exclaim with detestation against, and no doubt feel, oftentimes, strong restraints within from, contracting the heavy guilt of *adulterous lust*. ‘And what does this prove, but that *nature* has kindly interposed the strongest *guards*, against the *prostitution* of the marriage bed; such a stain in *itself*, such a dishonour to *families*, such a rending asunder the most sacred and useful *bond*, in all human society; and which can excite no other sentiments, than those of aversion and abhorrence, in every breast, from which all seeds of *ingenuity*, together with *religion*, are not quite extirpated.’

I HAVE thought it proper to introduce the subject *here*, as I did, more largely, under the head of the *husband's* fidelity, with these general reflections; that *both sexes* may be duely alarmed, and have their *indignation*, and *scorn*, and *horror*, so strongly excited, as to be prepared to repel every *temptation*, to the perpetration of one of the *basest*, most *treacherous*, and, I think I may add, most *cruel* too, of all immoralities.

BUT, besides, having specified, in their proper place, the *peculiar* aggravations, that attend this crime on the *husband's* side, to impress *his conscience* the more powerfully, and engage *his* boasted sense of *generosity*, and *honour*, to defend and guard his *fidelity*: I shall follow the same method in the present case, and
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shew what the more *special* aggravations, of an adulterous violation of the marriage tie, are, on the part of the *wife*. Hoping thereby, likewise, to fortify that more *soft* and *cautious* principle in *her*, that was intended as a *natural barrier*, to protect her *innocence*, and *purity*. And the chief things, which enhance and swell the guilt, of such shameful *breaches* of conjugal fidelity, in the *female sex*, are those which follow.

‘ FIRST, That, as was just hinted before, the gracious parent of the whole family of mankind (for both *males*, and *females*, are equally his off-spring, and the care of his indulgent providence) that he, I say, in the case of the *woman*, has been pleased to implant, and temper with her very constitution, an *ingenuous modesty*, that is shocked at the thought of all indecent *freedoms*, and gross *impurities*; and particularly *shy* and *fearful* (more so *here*, than in most other respects) of any attacks, that may be made, either on her *virgin* chastity, or *conjugal* honour. In consequence of her greater modesty, nature has also endued her, with a more quick and lively sense of *shame*. And from this root it is, that she feels more bitter *agonies* of confusion and remorse, in the *first* prospect of being *publickly* exposed, than is generally found to spring either from the principle of *honour*, or the passion of *shame*, in men. Add to this, that these, as to their *degree* at least, peculiar ingredients in female natures, are assisted, strengthened, and guarded yet more, by the *manner* of their *education*: Which, when it is careful and prudent, is more *close* and *reserved*, and more *restrained* to all, even the lowest, points of *decency*, than is, for the most part, that of the other sex.

So that when she wilfully degenerates, into the vile character of an *adulteress*, she acts not only against the general dictates of nature, but against the more immediate principles and laws of *her own* constitution. She renders herself, to a very high degree, infamous, odious to all the virtuous and chaste of her own sex, pitied and despised by the other; and in the eye of GOD, having broken through all the restraints which he kindly provided, to check lawless passion, and preserve her purity unfulled, she must, doubtless, appear, with very *foul* stains of *guilt* upon her soul.

AND it will be no wonder, as this is the point, in which, for the reasons above-mentioned, it was most *unnatural* in her to *err*, if afterwards she be found to deviate, still farther and farther, from the first implanted sentiments, and peculiar impulses, of her nature, and becomes, in the end, utterly hardened against all sense of shame. Her native modesty was intended to be the chief *ornament*, and *loveliness* (as it has, indeed, many irresistible charms, and graces, attending it) as well as ordained, for the *defense* of her sexes honour. This she must have both inwardly *felt*, and have been convinced of from common experience: And, therefore, when by offering violence to nature, and setting all decency at defiance, she breaks through this most engaging and powerful tie, the guilt of her *infidelity* must be, hereby, greatly heightened, and rendered more black and unpardonable.

‘ ANOTHER aggravation, of the guilt of an *adulterous wife*, differing in kind from those already suggested, but derived, as they are, from the *particular temperament* of the female sex, is this; that they are, while uncorrupted, apt to be sooner *moved*, and more *shocked*, at barbarities, at all gross acts of injustice

and outrage.' And having this *singular* restraint, besides the *common* principles of humanity, and *sense* of right, is it possible for them, without an uncommon naughtiness and pravity of heart, to be involved in a course of the most vile and detested injustice? of complicated injustice, injustice not only to *single persons*, but to whole *families*—by alienating *estates* from the *right heirs*; confounding *property*; and, by accidental *discoveries*, creating *embarrassment* in the *titles* to estates, that have for a long time been *peaceably*, and without *interruption*, possessed? As these *last* circumstances, by which the *innocent* must necessarily suffer, are likely to be, *oftener*, the consequence of the *wife's* than of the *husband's* infidelity, they may justly be reckoned, another of its heinous and *special* aggravations.

'LET me add farther, that the injury done, by this particular *offence*, is perhaps, beyond that of *all others* (the case of *murder* only excepted) *irreparable*; and that even the *confession*, and *ingenuous acknowledgment*, of it (which, with respect to many other injuries, is esteemed *some kind* of reparation; and, where the injurious person has no more in its power, may be accepted, by generous minds, as a *sufficient* reparation :) Even this, I say, *here*, will frequently *increase*, and *aggravate*, the injury, as it will add to the inconsoleable *affliction*, and the piercing *agonies* of grief, which the kind and tender-hearted-husband feels, by leaving him no possible room to *doubt* of his *dishonour*, nor, consequently, the least dawning of *hope*, to *palliate*, and relieve, his misery.'

THESE last, indeed, are mischievous and dreadful circumstances, attending the crime of adultery *universally*; and ought to have the same weight to deter the *husband* from the commission

sion of it, as the other contracting party in marriage, to whom they have been *directly* represented. And it is an undeniable branch of *his* duty, likewise, if this capital instance of *infidelity* be an unpardonable act of guilt in the *other sex*, carefully to avoid every thing, that may be an inducement or provocation to it: Every thing, that tends to create an aversion to his *person*, all ill usage, that may gradually extinguish *love*, and inspire deep and settled *resentment*. He should take care, to maintain a *strict watch*, over all his loose and wandering passions, that he may be a bright, and unexceptionable, *example of pure uncorrupted* fidelity. For if he violates *his own* solemn tie (though GOD may be righteously displeas'd, and will, doubtless, severely *punish*, and the world may justly *censure*, the *like* instance of *corruption* in the *wife*) yet *he himself*, without being quite *impudent* in vice, in excesses of most unbridled and licentious vice, cannot think that he has any *right to complain*.

‘ BUT let him guard, with the whole collected force of his reason, against the sin and torment of *causeless jealousy*, ordained, by the wife author of nature, to be a perpetual *punishment to itself*; because it is a *seed, fruitful* of every thing mischievous, and of irreconcilable discord.—A passion, *weak, ungenerous*, and *unmanly*, in itself; the utmost *dishonour* and *injury*, that can possibly be offered to an *innocent* and *faithful* wife; and which may prompt some of *impetuous* tempers, and not duly influenced by principles of *virtue* and *religion*, to meditate such wild schemes of *revenge*, as, in all probability, *no other* inordinate passion would ever have engaged them in.’ It is, therefore, a wise caution, which is given by the son of Syrac, in the book of *Ecclesiasticus** —Be not jealous over the

* Ecclus. ix. 1.

wife of thy bosom, and teach her not an evil lesson against thyself.

BUT let me remark here, before I conclude this head, that the passage, just cited, was only designed to intimate, what may be, *in fact*, the *fatal consequence* of groundless *jealousy*; but not in the least to *vindicate*, or *excuse*, such extravagant and unnatural *resentment* in the *wife*, for any *abuse*, or *wrong*, which she may have *unjustly* suffered: For though another *fails* in *his* duty, *mine* is still *inviolable*. Much less, can his doing me, a *lesser* injury, *justify* my being hurried on, by an uncontrolled transport, to the commission of a *greater*. ‘ Upon altogether as *reasonable* a ground, may *defamation*, and *slander*, provoke to *fraud*, and *robbery*, or a violent *assault* upon my person, though without actual mischief, to premeditated *murder* itself; — as *jealousy* can urge to *adultery*.’

THE FOURTH head, according to the division and arrangement, which I have made of the duty of *wives*, is *frugality*, and *prudence*. I have joined these two together, because ‘ *frugality* in *domestic* affairs, and especially in *personal* expences, is one of the chief and most eminent instances of *prudence*, in a wife.’

AND, here, the *general rule* for her conduct is, that all concerns, in which she may have the immediate *direction*, be managed with *decency*, without unnecessary *profuseness*; that she may do proper honour to the *husband*, and to *herself*, without squandering away the *family substance*. Now in order to her discharging, rightly, this part of her duty, it is, I think, absolutely necessary, that the *wife* be not immoderately fond of *publick entertainments*; in which, too much of that *pre-*
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cious time, which is the preparatory term allotted for *eternity*, is at best *unprofitably* spent, with very little improvement in any qualities, that are truly *valuable*, and to the neglect of more *important* concerns. Nor should she, if she would support the character of a frugal and prudent wife, affect to shew an ostentation *beyond* her rank, nor *emulate* persons in *higher* circumstances; in whom the very same expence, that is *extravagance* in her, may be a reasonable and just *oeconomy*. And such conduct will, in all probability, defeat the end, which she herself may *aim* at. For the world is apt to be *ensorious*, and much more inclined to be *impertinently* inquisitive about the affairs of other people, than to *attend* to their own, and will therefore *secretly* despise what, they imagine, to be an indiscreet and excessive *ostentation*, however they may admire, applaud, and encourage, it in *public*.

In this indeed, as well as in almost all other instances, none but *general* directions can be laid down, without a tedious and endless prolixity. Both *husbands*, and *wives*, must be left, to their own consciences and honour, to make the minute, and direct, *application* to particular cases. I choose, therefore, to mention but one *special* case, which I think of importance, and highly worthy of regard, which is this----- ‘ that it seems, to me, to be utterly inconsistent with the due *frugality* and *prudence* of a *wife*, to embezzle *clandestinely*, and *gradually*, any part of the family stock for her own *private* purposes of *ease*, *gratification*, or *splendor*----*present*, or *future* : And that, by this, she may imperceptibly *embarrass* the *husband*’s affairs, and schemes for their *common* good, and greatly *hurt* the interest of the *family* in general. Besides, that, if it be once *discovered*, it has a certain tendency to destroy mutual *confidence*, and beget *jealousies*, and a notion of *separate*

separate interests, with which mutual cordial love is impossible to be reconciled.'

BUT let me add here, that if the *husband* would engage the *wife*, to a punctual and exact discharge of this part of *her* duty, there are requirements of *prudence*, indispensable on *his* side likewise. He himself must be an example of *frugality*. He must not assume the sole right to be *profuse*, and pursue extravagant pleasures. He must, in proportion to his circumstances, be of a *generous*, and not of a *niggardly* and *churlish*, disposition. He must gratify his wife in all *reasonable* desires, with respect to elegancies and conveniencies, as well as to the bare necessaries, of her station. Otherwise, there is ground to fear, that women, who are denied what is really *proper* and *fit*, from the general inclination, that discovers itself in human nature, to run from one *extreme* to *another*, will be induced to contract such habits of *negligence* at least, if not of *profuseness*, as might have been entirely prevented, by just and reasonable acts of generosity in their husbands.

BUT, besides frugality, there are *other* branches of *prudence* necessary in a wife, for her own honour, and the due regulation of family government. And these are-----' the right management of *domestic* affairs; the assigning to every member of the family, more directly under her *care*, its proper *offices*; the preserving, always, the appearance of *cleanliness*, *order*, *decency*; the providing, as much as is possible, for accidental *visits*, and that the friends of the husband, or those, to whom he is obliged in point of interest, may not be received with any visible marks of *disturbance*, *hurry*, and *confusion*; and the not being too much from *home*, on occasions of *curiosity*, *amusement*, or *ceremony*.'—

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By which, the wife must, of necessity, be *ignorant* of what is necessary to be consulted, and attended to, within her own *sphere* of government, and the *family*, without a *head*, must be left to the full swing of their own depraved, and irregular, inclinations.

OTHER necessary acts of *prudence* are-----consulting the husband's *temper*, and endeavouring to accommodate, within the bounds of religion and innocence, her own *behaviour* and *manners* to it; the avoiding all *returns* of passion, pouring oil on the flame, instead of raising it to a greater height; maintaining a steady equal temper, affability and complaisance without *flattery*, or any extravagant transports of affection, that may look like *artifice* and *deign*; nor affecting frights, unusual agonies and convulsions of grief, which, when once discovered to be only *feigned*, may raise a high disgust, and utterly alienate the husband's love; and, finally, the never *upbraiding* him, if that should be really the case, with the meanness of his *extraction*, or the inferiority of his *fortune*: For this will most surely exasperate, and inflame, little differences, into open animosity and variance, as *pride*, and *self-love*, are two of the most predominant principles, in all mankind.

BUT let the *husband*, on the other hand, in order to secure this desirable state of things, avoid, on *his part*, arrogance and tyranny, and insolence of passion. Let him not forget the obligations of *ingenuity*, and *gratitude*, which he is laid under to the wife, who, by entrusting him with a fortune superior to his own, has raised him from a meaner rank in life. Let him take care, that the *company*, which he introduces to his wife, be, at least, such in the general, as know how to confine themselves, within

within the bounds of *decency* and *discretion*: For a woman must be of a firm, and inflexible, disposition indeed, if she shews no *sign of discontent* and *offence*, at the *immodest, rude*, conversation of rakes and libertines. And, to sum up all, let him manage all his affairs with discretion, and without intricacy and disorder, or *he* can have no reason to expect, and has no right to demand, regularity and exactness in the female administration.

THE duty of a *wife* is, indeed, still the *same*, though not the fair and consistent *claim* of the *husband*: And if, notwithstanding his exceptionable conduct, she honourably sustains her character, and discharges the proper obligations of it, she will be that *virtuous woman*, described by *Solomon*, in the last chapter of the book of *Proverbs*,-----whose *price is above rubies*. *The heart of her husband doth, safely, trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. Strength and honour are her cloathing. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and, in her tongue, is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: For all her household are cloathed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry, her cloathing is silk, and purple. Her children arise up, and call her blessed: Her husband also, and he praiseth her.*-----Such a prudent wife is a portion from the LORD *.

* Prov. xix. 14.

To *mee kness*, as it stands opposed to brawling, and a spirit of contention, to passion, arrogance, and a restless impetuosity of temper, I need say but little; because, that this is a most decent, honourable, indispensable, qualification of a *good wife*, will be universally admitted; nor will *she herself*, I am persuaded, venture to dispute, directly, the *propriety of this part* of her character. And it must, likewise, be her *interest*, to cultivate this virtue to its utmost heighth, both to *preserve* the affection of her husband, or, if it be *deficient*, to *restore* it. ‘Nothing has so certain an effect to bend the *stubborn*, soften the *obdurate*, and cool down the *inflexible* and *violent* temper.’

AND as to the *education* of children, which is often introduced amongst the *offices of husbands and wives*, I choose entirely to omit it here; because it more properly belongs to the *duty of parents*, hereafter to be considered.

NOTHING, therefore, remains now to be insisted on, according to the order, in which I proposed to treat this subject, but *modesty*. By which, I not only mean *modest discourse*, and *modest carriage*; ‘but *moderation*, in outward *magnificence*, *dress*, *equipage* :’ Which was thought of so much importance, by the first preachers of *Christianity*, that two, of the most *eminent Apostles* of our Lord, have expressly recommended and enforced it, in the following passages. The first is in the writings of *St. Paul*, where he advises — *that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with brodered hair, or pearls, or costly array; but (that which become women professing godliness) with good works* *. *St. Peter* directs to the same purpose,

* 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

in an exhortation immediately addressed to *wives*—*Whose adorning*, says he, *let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible*—†.

AND because these exhortations, with others of a like nature, tending to restrain *vanity* and *luxury*, may be represented as the effects of a *stiff* and *ill-bred enthusiasm*, and raise, in the minds of the gay part of men and women, a strong *prejudice* against the *Christian* religion itself; I think it necessary, to prevent a consequence, that is likely to prove so fatal to religion in general, to attempt a brief *explanation* of the *rules* here laid down; and to shew, particularly, the *end*, which they were intended to serve; their true *meaning*; their *limitations*; their *excesses*.

IT was the great design of *Christianity*, to *refine* and *embellish* human nature, and raise it to the highest pitch of real *beauty* and *dignity*. In order to which, it must first be stripped of all *false ornaments*, which corrupt passion, and pride, and depraved sentiments of what is truly polite and amiable, have introduced under various unnatural forms; to the sinking mankind far beneath their proper *station*, and *rank* in the creation. And when this *rubbish* is happily removed, then, and then alone, will there be a proper foundation for a *superstructure* of a *different* kind; not the fabric of fancy, or of blind and corrupted appetite, but the product of wisdom, and right dispositions.

THIS remark, as to the grand intention, and natural influence, of the *Christian* doctrine, will be found to hold true universally,

† 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

in every *application*, that can possibly be made of it, to the condition and state of human nature. And it is with this view, that the Apostles of *Christ*, before-cited, have enforced the argument, in particular, with respect to *that sex*, which was intended, by the God of nature, to be the most engaging and attractive object, in this visible part of his creation; ‘by pointing out to them, what are their truest and most shining decorations, which will add a *lustre*, at the same time that they are infinitely *superior* in *worth*, to all the casual, fleeting, withering, graces of outward *form* and *person*; and exposing, at the same time, the little arts of *vanity* and *ostentation*, which are such *trifles* in the scale of *reason*, that they cannot so much as *palliate* their real inward defects. This is, indeed, the great point to be considered: Because till such vanities are, in a good measure, rooted out of the *heart*, and the *affections*, substantial *ornaments* will never recommend themselves. But, on the other hand, it is highly probable, that, in proportion, as women *disengage* themselves from a *weak devotedness* to novelty, variety, and external shew of magnificence, they will be more *studious* to *improve* in the inward graces of the mind.’

To which let me add, that in explaining these, and all other directions of a parallel kind, there is great danger of two *extremes*. The one is, that of a too literal and rigid interpretation—as if splendor, and sumptuousness, of dress, was *absolutely*, and upon *all occasions*, unlawful. The next is a more common, and a much more dangerous, excess—by which giddy minds, not used to reflection, or to fix the strict measures of right and wrong, upon being allowed *any* alleviations and exceptions at all, go on *relaxing*, and *excepting*, till they *evacuate* the *whole* substance of the prohibition.—Admit only, that richness, and magnificence, of

dress is *ever* expedient, and justifiable, this, with them, is much the same, as breaking down *all fences*, and giving an *unrestrained licence* to profuseness, and luxury. Thus, then, the general *end* of the Apostolic directions, which I am now defending, appears to be, in itself, *wise* and *fit*, and highly *honourable* to both sexes: The next thing to be enquired into is, what is their true *sense* and *import*.

AND, in general, it can by no means be justly supposed, that the things, which these two Apostles have particularly mentioned, are *universally* and *absolutely* forbidden. For what is there, that can render the wearing of *gold* more criminal *in itself*, than the wearing of *brass*; or ornaments of *jewels*, than strings of *pebbles*, and the *Indian* magnificence of *shells* and *feathers*? As to matter, and form, and figure, they are *all* equally *indifferent*, and designed, by the maker of the world, to be subservient to the *uses* and *purposes* of man. And where *baser metals* are preferred to gold, and *glass* to stones, which, we may absurdly rate at an inestimable price, only on account of their being scarcer, and of a more shining lustre; there the prohibition, regulating the *excess* of vanity, would have most wisely run in a *contrary* strain; for example thus—‘Whose *adorning*, let it not be the wearing of lead, nor the *outward* *adorning*, of shaving the head, [*instead of* plaiting the hair] should that have been fixed upon by fancy, which is infinitely wild, as the *high taste* of *pride*, and *luxurious politeness*.’

THIS is a demonstration, that, in plain abstracted reason, all these things are upon a *level*, either the use of *all*, or of *none*, absolutely unlawful. But whatever there is amiss, and unbecoming women *professing godliness*, in *adorning* themselves in the manner

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ner expressly censured, must arise entirely from *circumstances*—from the *indecent* of such dress in the *wearer*, and the corrupt *dispositions*, and *passions*, that accompany it. And, even here, it must be considered, whether the evil temper, and the corrupt passions, spring *directly*, and necessarily, from the *things themselves* which are used as ornaments, or from *other causes*: If the abuse be merely *accidental*, it is not only what *indifferent* objects, but what even the very *best*, are liable to.

AND that what, I have now stated, is the real truth of the case, is evident from this single consideration, that though, the more *sumptuous* and *expensive* the modish *dress* is, it will upon the whole (especially, while there remains that *unnatural affectation* of appearing all upon a level, notwithstanding the difference of ranks and stations, which the providence of GOD, and the institutions of civil society, have wisely ordained) though, I say, this more sumptuous and expensive dress must be attended with more *pernicious* consequences upon *the whole*; yet this is not, in the least, derived from the *nature* and *quality* of the several ornaments themselves, but from the *value*, which imagination and vanity have *arbitrarily* set upon them. ‘For if the utmost *plainness* and *simplicity*, in dress, were the height of *fashionable* ornament and elegance; in this *grave* and *modest* dress, as it may now seem (and, I doubt not, but upon somewhat of a right foundation in nature too) the *danger* to *virtue*, and the *indecent emulation*, in *wives* professing *Christianity*, would ultimately *center*.’ Only, let *good* wives, and *Christian* wives, professing the doctrine that is according to godliness, frugality, and moderation (besides comporting themselves within the limits of the invariable rules, which I shall presently propose) never affect to be among the *first* in alterations of fashion; nor carry their *emulation*, where they
may

may think themselves obliged, in decency, to follow custom, to the *utmost length*. Let them imitate the *reasonable*, and not the *fantastical*; the *modest*, and not the *arrogant*. And of the reasonable and modest, let their *imitation* be *strictly* confined, to the *proprieties* of their own *character*, and *degree* in life.

WE may add to all this, that the wearing of *gold*, and the putting on *costly apparel*, is not only not unlawful and criminal in itself, but may upon some occasions, and with respect to some stations, be expedient, and in a manner necessary. The wise author of nature has plainly appointed various orders, and subordinations, of human life; and of *these*, difference in *habit* is one just *outward distinction*: And the particular posts and offices in society, which some sustain, may require an *appearance* and *shew* of magnificence. And it would seem ridiculous to almost every one, and be indeed, in some measure absurd, in itself, if all should dress either with the same *sumptuousness*, or with equal *simplicity*.

BESIDES there are many other expressions, and exhortations, of a like kind with those, which I am now considering, where the sense neither *is*, nor can *possibly be*, *absolute*, but must be *comparative* only. Thus, for example,——*love not the world, neither the things that are in the world* *——*Lay not up, for yourselves, treasures upon earth, but lay up, for yourselves, treasures in heaven* †——*Labour not for the meat, that perisheth, but for that meat, which endureth unto everlasting life* ‡——In all these passages, to suppose the things, which *Christians* are cautioned against, to be *condemned* in every degree, must root out natural affection,

* 1 John ii. 15.

† Matth. vi. 19, 20.

‡ John vi. 27.

and friendship, and introduce idleness, and beggary, and general wretchedness, and confusion.

AND, therefore, *lay not up, for yourselves, treasures on earth*, can mean no more than—‘*Regard and pursue not these uncertain and perishing enjoyments, as your highest and most substantial treasure:*’ *Love not the world*, can denote nothing further than this—‘*Let not your affections be immoderately, and chiefly, fixed on outward temporary objects:*’ And we fully comply with our Saviour’s advice, not to *labour for the meat that perisheth*—‘*when we are ultimately intent on providing, and securing, that food of knowledge and good dispositions, which will continue to nourish, strengthen, and improve the soul, to all eternity; and when the other, in comparison of this infinitely greater and more momentous concern, is contemned and neglected.*’

AND thus also, when it is urged upon *wives*, by Apostolical authority, not to let their *adorning* be the *outward adorning*, of *plaiting the hair*, of *wearing of gold*, and *putting on of apparel*, it is natural to understand it thus, by an evident parity of reason—their *principal* adorning. For scarce, in any case, can we imagine, that a prohibition is *absolute*, and will admit of no *exception*, but where the practice forbidden is, in *its own* nature, *evil*, and *unwarrantable*.

BUT though the *Christian* directions, upon this head, should be allowed not to amount, to a strict and total prohibition, there must doubtless be *some instances of excess*, to which they more *directly*, and *specially*, refer: Otherwise, they signify just *nothing* at all, and can have neither *weight*, nor *propriety*, in them. And
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what *these* instances are, is the only question that remains to be determined.

AND, FIRST, 'All such *cost*, and *gaudiness* of dress, must be *for ever* condemned, which *ministers* to *pride*, and *vanity*: I mean not, barely as a *temptation*: for *such*, things the most innocent, nay the most praise-worthy and honourable, may *accidentally* prove; but which *taints* and *corrupts* the heart, by *actually producing* these degenerate and base habits.' Should it be alleged, that, still, the *fault* is *not* in the *dress*, but in the *wearer*: I admit, that, absolutely considered, it is not; but, yet, none can with justice deny, that (though the *right use* of it be lawful) the *perverting* it to purposes of *vice*, and sinful *arrogance*, must be always criminal. What, I have now represented, may be stiled, in other terms, the *pride of dress*; and, under that denomination, there can be no objection against its being severely, and equally, condemned, both by *Christianity*, and *reason*.

AND the certain *marks*, and *characters*, of this excess are——when *wives* imagine, that there is a *real honour*, and *merit*, in dress; that their *profuseness*, or *elegance*, gives them a *preheminance* above those, who are *less* splendidly and modishly adorned; when they expect, without any qualities that are truly *worthy* and *amiable*, to be admired and applauded, on this *single* account; and are apt to treat, with *contempt* and *scorn*, those that want the same outward, insignificant, trifling, *glare* of *artificial* and *spurious* ornaments.——This is one of the most *low* and *unnatural* kinds of pride, that can possibly actuate a human breast: It confounds the eternal difference of things, and is utterly inconsistent with *reason*, *virtue*, and *decency*.

ANOTHER

ANOTHER extreme is, ‘ when such *attention* is given to these superficial exterior decorations, as diverts wives from a discharge of their indispensable *duties*, from a regard to those necessary *domestic offices*, without which, it is absolutely impossible, that they should be either good *wives*, or good *Christians*; and when, a much *larger proportion*, of that valuable and precious *time*, which ought to be devoted to the prudent and religious *education* of *children*, and the proper *regulation* of *servants*, is *wispent* in ornaments of extravagance and luxury, than such *unprofitable* and *trifling* articles can justly demand.’ This, instead of attracting real esteem, must be a character, both despicable, and odious. Wives are, by such conduct, *corrupted*, and *hindered* in the great *concern* of life; and husbands *injured*, and *dishonoured*.

AGAIN, ‘ *immodest* dress, or such as feeds impurity, and administers fuel to loose desires, must, always, be indecent and inexcusable.’ Modesty, and shame, are indeed, in particular instances, sometimes *directed*, and, in a great measure *determined*, by the *peculiar customs*, and *sentiments*, that have been long established, in the several countries and ages of the world. But, notwithstanding this, *modesty itself*, and *reluctance*, and *shame*, at the thought of things really *indecent*, and *unbecoming*, are *eternal* principles, springing from the right constitution, and order, of human nature. There is, without doubt, a modesty and immodesty in *dress*, as well as in *discourse*, and the general course of *conduct*: And I will venture to charge, with being *immodest*, all such attire, as is both *adapted*, and *intended*, to ensnare, and captivate; to raise general admiration; and engage wanton licentious appetite.

‘THIS, by many antient commentators, is supposed to be the chief reason, why St. Peter particularly speaks of *plaiting the hair*, and of *wearing of gold*; because this was, in *his time*, the affected *distinction* of *wanton lewd* women, who had renounced the natural reserve, and modesty, of their sex.’ And I should be sorry, if the *female dress*, in *this age*, bears any considerable *resemblance* to this. Where it does, women of a good understanding, and of genteel accomplishments, will easily find a way of avoiding the *excess*, without appearing, upon the whole, *unpolite*, or *inelegant*. And others will, I hope, be persuaded to preserve their *decency*, and *Christianity*, unspotted, though they should lose some part of their character, with respect to *exactness* in *superfluous* and *fashionable trifles*.

FURTHER, that dress may be justly deemed *extravagant*, which hinders the *wife*, from performing those necessary acts of *charity* and *goodness*, which may be expected from one of her character and station; which prevents her *adorning* herself with works of beneficence, the chief grace and dignity of human nature, in all circumstances, and all conditions; which is claimed as the *chief female* embellishment, and preferred to real and durable excellence: And, in the LAST place, all *splendor* and *magnificence*, that is beyond the *quality* of the wearer; which is both a shameful *extreme* in itself, and tends to *poverty*, and *misery*. Wives may be, here, apt to plead the general *custom*, amongst persons of their *own rank*: But will the excesses of *another* justify, or even excuse, *my* excesses? Not in the least: For if this be allowed, it must open a door for universal uncontrouled licentiousness; and there will be an utter end of all moderation, honour, virtue, in *both sexes*, and in every degree of human life.

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THUS have I offered some brief thoughts, upon a subject, perhaps, *new* to the generality, and probably, by them, entirely *unexamined*; but which, I myself must think of *importance*, while I profess myself to be a *Christian*; because the inspired Apostles of our Lord have particularly urged, and enforced it. Nay, I must look upon it as a point of great consequence, as I am a *man*, and a well-wisher to the *purity*, and *dignity*, of my own kind. *Vanity*, whether in dress, or in any other article, when it is once admitted, *dilates*, and *spreads* itself; and, in the end, it *occupies* the whole soul, and greatly *debases* it. ‘Nor has any thing had so *fatal* an effect, to root out *Christianity*, and a *serious sense* of all true religion, as the *tyranny* of *custom*, and the *meanness* and *pusillanimity*, of consenting to be *enslaved* by it.’

C H A P. IV.

Some observations on the true ground of the duty of parents towards their children, and on its general nature, and offices.

THE authority, of Parents, is one of the greatest and most important *trusts*, that the sovereign wisdom, of the eternal parent of the universe, has thought fit to vest in mankind. And, therefore, the *right execution* of this trust, by a conscientious performance of every part of parental duty, may justly be ranked among the chief obligations of religion; among the first, in order of nature, and the most diffusive, and momentous, in their consequences. It is that fundamental tie, on which public morality, honour, and society, in a great measure depend; and the ends of GOD's government are *instrumentally subserved*, and promoted by it, with greater *visible effect*, than they are, or perhaps can be, by any other single branch of conduct, within the whole scope of social morality. If this, upon enquiry, holds true, it must powerfully enforce, the *parent's duty*, upon his reason, conscience, sense of true interest; and upon every religious, generous, and wise principle, that was at first implanted, or can possibly take place, in his nature. And that nothing has, here, been exaggerated, the common reflections of his own understanding will convince him, and experience, and observation, will confirm.

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FROM the tender care of *parents* (as the world was first constituted, and is at present, generally, conducted) the very *continuance* of the race of mankind, and the *successive propagation* of human nature, spring. And by their neglect, and unnatural cruelty, they may not only be the *destroyers* of their own *immediate off-spring*; but (if all universally concurred in this remorseless and barbarous scheme) in a degree shocking to thought, the *murderers* of a *whole species*; derived from an infinitely higher original, and the intelligent subjects of his *paternal* government. For if children were not entirely and publicly *deserted*, but barely *treated* with that *secret* disregard, and those, for the most part, *undiscoverable* neglects and savage inhumanities, which *civil laws* could seldom *punish*, nor consequently *restrain*, an age, or two, might almost *depopulate* the world: And if *one* such instance be allowable, *every* instance, of the same kind, must be allowed. The provident care, therefore, of parents for their children, in the *first irrational*, and absolutely *defenceless*, stage of human life, is hereby proved, beyond all exception, to be an inviolable law of nature, and one of its wisest, and most important, institutions.

IF we rise higher, to the stage when *reason* begins to *open*, when *conscience*, and the *first dawning sense* of *morality* discovers itself, in *children*; of still greater moment, will the right discharge, of the *parents* duty, appear to be: Because this is the scene for *nurturing* the understanding, and laying the *foundation* of good and useful manners; which is to the *person himself*, who is committed to our charge and cultivation, and may oftentimes be to the *public*, of infinitely higher concern, than the mere preservation of his animal life.

‘DETESTABLE and monstrous, as the *destruction* of our *own off-spring* may appear, both in the sight of GOD, and man, the training them up, by a gross wilful *failure* in the discharge of our parental duty, in *ignorance* and *vice*, to the *corruption*, *infamy*, and eternal *ruin* of the soul, is to be the *instrument* of their far greater infelicity, both in its nature, and duration; as it is, in itself, much better *not to be*, than to be *depraved* and *degenerate*, and *estranged* from the very *desire*, as well as the necessary *temper*, of true happiness.’

THE proper maturity, therefore, of reason in *children*, the just formation of their morals, their honour and usefulness, their present comfort, and welfare throughout the whole of their immortal being, depending, in so great a degree, on *parents* fulfilling the *obligations* of their *station* and *character*; their *duty* must, of necessity, be as strict, as indispensable, and momentous, as the authority of GOD, the strongest enforcements of *nature*, and the interests of *both worlds*, can make it.

‘AND if the *laws* of human society could, generally, take *cognizance* of such cases as these, which are offices of duty (and, in consequence of this, the omissions likewise are) of a more *private* nature, than to be *ascertained*, and distinctly *stated*, with all their meritorious, or aggravating, circumstances: But if, I say, they could, on *both* sides, be fixed and proved with *certainly*, no virtue could deserve better, and very few in an equal degree, *public* encouragement and reward; nor any crime be, more fitly, the subject of *civil* penalties.’ And it is most reasonable to suppose, that the supreme dispenser of justice, as, in the present case it is hardly possible, that there should be an equitable distribution

bution *here*, will take care to distinguish, the more remarkably both the *virtue*, and the *offence*, by suitable tokens of his favour, or displeasure, *hereafter*.

To illustrate, yet further, the general weight and influence of the duty of *parents*, let it be considered, that the obligations of *children* arise chiefly, I might almost say, entirely, from their *first* discharging, at least in the greater and more essential instances, *their natural* obligations. Of this, a few easy reflexions, upon the subject, will soon convince us.

‘ MY parent, I allow, to be the *instrument*, or *secondary cause*, of my being. Let me then examine, whether *any*, or *what degree* of, filial duty results from this one *single* circumstance, abstracting from all *other* motives. If, in this instrumentality, he *intended* only the *gratification* of his own private desires, it was so far a *selfish*, and not a *benevolent*, purpose, and can, in its own nature, claim no returns of *gratitude*. And if he designed it for my *benefit*, which I look upon as the only true ground of my *reciprocal* obligation, this must appear from other, more *certain*, proofs. The mere derivation of *existence* may either be a *benefit*, or a most heavy deplorable *infelicity*, as *proper*, or *no*, provision at all is made, for the comfortable *support* of it, and as its *first* opening prospects, and manners, are *directed*.’

‘ BUT the *parent*, we will suppose, *cherishes* his child with an affectionate indulgent care, and with all the circumspection and assiduity that nature requires, in his infirm helpless state of *infancy*; assists and cherishes his *understanding*, in its tender growth does; his utmost, according to his ability, to inculcate and impress *religious principles*, and raise, in his mind, *right moral*

ral sentiments, besides providing for him, the necessary nutriment, and accommodation, suited to his rank: And this conduct, most certainly, constitutes an indispensable tie of *duty*, on the *child's* part. But does not the obligation result, almost, from *this alone*? Is it at all derived, from the *instrumental* communication of being? From the *involuntary, unintentional*, and merely *casual*, communication of an *eligible* and *happy* being? No: Most certain it is, and self-evident, that parents can properly demand no reverence, no gratitude, or honour, upon this account only; and that the *bare* relation of a parent, disclaiming the proper offices and duties of a parent, is a relation quite *unnatural*, and can, therefore, never be justly assigned, as the ground of natures *filial, mutual, and corresponding*, laws.'

'THE *father*, without *my* consent, *forced* me into existence; in my infant state, when the laws of my country *restrained* him, by the *fear* of capital punishment, from being my destroyer, and murderer, he still treated me, with an utter *insensibility* to the most sacred ties, and instincts, of natural affection, and afforded me no *relief*, or *comfort*, but what was necessary to support a *miserable* being: He utterly neglected my *education*, and denied me the *conveniencies*, suited to his character and rank in life: He *discarded* me, for no other reason, but that of getting rid of a burden on his *fortunes*, and a clog to his *luxury*.—In this extremity, *another*, moved by compassion and generosity of mind, *adopted* me, and discharged all the offices of the *real, natural*, parent.'

'To *which* then am I, in *right*, or in *nature*, obliged? To *which* am I, in *competition* and *preference*, obliged? To him, to whom I *owe* nothing, and against whom, I can *charge* cruelty, and

and a violation of my native rights? Or to the *other*, to whom I was originally linked in no relation, but as man to man; from whom, however, I have received entirely *disinterested*, and *unmerited*, favours? The latter, the reason of all mankind will acknowledge, to be the parent justly *revered*, *honoured*, and *obeyed*.⁷ God himself would not be served from *love*, and an ingenuous sense of *duty*, were he the *like* unaffectionate, and unnatural, father of the intelligent creation, with the character before described; however he might be slavishly complimented, and patiently submitted to, as the supreme and irresistible *power*. And all this is the strongest, general, enforcement of the *duty* of *parents* in every branch of it, from nature, right, and interest.

I BEG leave to subjoin one general remark more, and that is, that *parental* government is, or ought to be, from its *peculiar character*, as well as from the *ultimate design* of it, the most easy, mild, and gracious of all others. Oppression, and tyranny, are *contradictions* to its very nature. And the *excess* it rather inclines to, where the warmest affections and propensities of nature are cherished, and indulged, is that of a too great *softness*, and *relaxation* of *authority*. ‘The parent, in common, is much more likely to drop the *reason*, than the *benevolence*, and *tender feelings*, of a man.’ And though this, in particular instances, may be very wrong, and attended with injurious and fatal consequences, yet it plainly shews us, to what kind of behaviour, the character of parent leads upon the *whole*: And that the general direction and bias of *nature*, in the exercise of parental power, is to clemency, and not to rigour.

BUT, then, it is proper to be remarked, that what has been, before said, cannot imply in it, that parents should impose no *restraints*, that may *accidentally* raise even a violent resentment, in children of a perverse and irreclaimable temper; but only, that they be careful not to give *just cause* of provocation, and complaint, by an undeserved ill treatment. For the *stubborn* will be apt to complain, if all their wild and fantastical humours are not fully gratified: The *vain*, if they are limited, and circumscribed, in any article of their profuseness, and ostentation: The *licentious*, if they are controuled in their extravagancies of pleasure, and luxury—But, notwithstanding this, it is the parent's duty to be resolute and inflexible, and not to *relax* the *least point* of his natural, and rightful, authority; because the honour of children, and their happiness both here and hereafter, depend on their being *regulated*, and wisely *bounded*, in all the demands of their obstinacy, pride, and wanton desire. To *indulge*, here, is the same, as to *corrupt*, and *ruin*.

BUT, in common, let the exercise of their authority be mild, and persuasive. Let them avoid all *appearances*, of an arbitrary and domineering tyranny. Let not their *commands* be rigorous. Let them not treat their children as *slaves*, and exchange the character of father, for that of *oppressor*, and *enemy*. Let them *deny* no proper conveniencies, nor *abridge* of any innocent gratifications. For this is utterly unbecoming their station, monstrous and unnatural in itself, and the consequence of it will probably be, an utter *alienation* of the childrens affection and duty; and *exciting* such strong passions of discontent, and resentment, as may *end*, at length, in *avowed* contempt and disobedience.

THUS,

THUS, have I prepared the way for the great point of all, *viz.* the proper *education* of children: But this, on account of its singular importance, I shall make the subject of a new chapter. In which, to render the whole more impressivè, and clear to all capacities, the principles already mentioned, in a general way, must be frequently re-assumed, and argued from, and more copiously and minutely enforced.

C H A P. V.

On education.

IN treating of education *at large*, but more especially of *religious* education, it is equally necessary, that the chief, and most dangerous, *impediments* should be removed, as it is, or can be, that the fittest and most approved *rules* should be prescribed: Because, while these *obstructions* remain, and are likely to have their fatal *repugnant* influence, it is scarce possible, that the *rightest rule*, in reason, should have any more *real effect*, than if it was absolutely *unknown*. ‘If you would *cultivate* the soil, it is here, as in inanimate nature, you must prevent the growth of noxious *weeds*, that will *suffocate* the seeds of wisdom, and virtue, in their very birth; and, by their rankness and luxuriancy, deprive the latter of their necessary *nourishment*, and hinder their ever rising to a state of *maturity*.’—Let *parents*, therefore, take particular care, that an *aversion*, to the terror of their authority, creates not a *slight* and *contempt* of their admonitions. By their kindness and condescension, let them induce their *children*, to place some degree of *confidence* in their *instructions*; and consider, that if, by an unnatural harsh treatment, they are once brought to regard parents as their *enemies*, their best *advices* will be *suspected*.

ANGER and resentment naturally lead to an opposition, a warm determined opposition, of sentiment and practice; especially

ally in the *first openings* of human life, when *reason* is generally a *feeble* guide, without sufficient *light*, or *authority*, to enforce its own laws; and *fancy*, and *passion*, are the chief steering principles, under whose *influence*, in a great measure, wisdom, and even virtue itself, must be *gradually infused*. If our children *bate* us, they will never heartily *cherish* those instructions; which, from *fear*, they may outwardly comply with: Nay their inward *reluctance*, when the restraint of authority is removed, will, probably, break out into unexpected acts of extravagance. Then, if not before, we shall see, with shame and bitter remorse, the destructive consequences of our too high strain and arrogance of *power*, and experience, that it is amply revenged upon ourselves.

WHEREAS, had the mild and gracious character of the *father*, restrained and tempered that of the *governor*, the child would probably have attended, on parental admonitions, with assiduity and delight. There might, then, have been an *early prepossession*, from almost the first displays of thought, in favour of wisdom, of rational religion, and practical serious virtue; 'which, before the understanding was capable of making any considerable efforts, in distinguishing between *right* and *wrong* impressions, might have been wrought into an useful *moral habit*: As *strong*, and oftentimes as hard to be *conquered*, as, in some of the best and wisest, are the first contracted *childish habits* of vice, and superstition.' This prepossession, reason would, afterwards, as certainly *confirm*, as it would *dissipate*, and *chase away*, all others of wild and unnatural growth. So that by this method of *introduction*, into reasonable and accountable life, *good* principles may be both ingrafted, and established; *bad* ones, perhaps, as easily planted; but, if the authority of reason be not quite

quite suppressed, not so long *retained*, nor *corroborated* by age, reflection, and experience.

ANOTHER preliminary, to wife and good *education*, is in general, the *guarding*, strictly, against all the corrupt sentiments, wrong passions, and early degenerate habits, which, till they are rooted out, or at least reduced under the intire controul and discipline of reason, will render all the methods we can pursue, in forming the principles and manners of *youth*, fruitless and unsuccessful. The greatest pains in instructing, while these fatal obstacles remain, must be like scattering *seed* on *rocks*, and barren *deserts*, and where nature never intended, that there should be any *verdure*, or *fertility*; and from whence indeed, in the *moral* part of the comparison, it is eternally *fit*, for the punishment of inordinate passion, indolence, and vice, that no solid *proficiency*, nothing tending to *happiness* upon the whole, should ever spring.

DEFEND your *children*, therefore, as much as is possible, against the *first* impressions of profaneness, against blasphemous violations of the holy name, and tremendous character, of GOD. Honour him, by a solemn acknowledgment and homage in your *families*, and neglect not to attend, *regularly*, on the appointed services of his *public* worship. Be not yourselves, in *example*, impious, whilst you urge them to be religious. Instil into them *no aspirings* after distinction, and pride of dress, of high rank, and politeness of education, while you desire to inculcate the duty of *humility*. Be not *luxuricus*, if you expect, from them, *moderation* of conduct. Be not *stiff* and *arrogant*, if you wish to form their manners, to *mildness* and *condescension*. Propose not your own *intemperance*, as the *comment* on your lectures of *sobriety*;

briety; your own *disorderly lives*, to recommend *chastity*; your *fraud*, to enforce *Justice*; nor your *partiality*, and *narrowness* of mind, to support the great law of disinterested, and universal, *benevolence*. For by all these acts of inconsistency, by which you must condemn yourselves, you will demonstrate, that you are only, in *theory*, advocates for *virtue*, but, in *reality*, the votaries of *vice*; and that you are enemies to the moral government of GOD, to whom, it is *your children's* duty, absolutely to devote and consecrate themselves.

LET me add, that if instructions, admonitions, and example, are not sufficient, to answer the great end of parental tuition and discipline, *corrections* are absolutely necessary.—But *these* should be mild, friendly, and dispassionate, and the *reasons* of them, in most cases, proposed to *children* themselves; in order to convince their *judgments*, that they are necessary, and not despotic and tyrannical. We should always guard, against their being extravagantly severe, lest we inspire an opinion that they proceed not from *love*, but *cruelty*. It is likewise highly expedient, in order to their obtaining their proper effect, that they be not only *moderate*, but *seasonable*—Upon the *first appearance* of *vicious* disposition; that they may *check*, in its *infant* growth, what, upon being allowed to arrive to a state of *confirmation*, might be utterly *incorrigible*.

‘THE *delicate* constitution of the *child* may, perhaps be pleaded, in exclusion of this useful, and upon some occasions indispensable, branch of *parental* discipline.’ And this, I allow, is a reason for its being *gentle*, and justly proportioned to his *age*, and state of *health*, but it can be none for its being entirely *omitted*; because the neglecting the *castigation* and improvement of the mind,

mind, for the sake of bodily ease and indulgence (when these two things come into *competition*, so that the one or the other must be disregarded) is an absolute perversion of the order of nature: It is a preferring *means* to *ends*, and *accidents* to things *essential*: It is, in effect, neglecting *moral*, for sensible, and *immortal*, for temporary and transient concerns, against all rules of reason, and every dictate both of self-interest, and public good.

HOWEVER, after all that I have now said, on the head of moderate and seasonable *correction* of childrens faults, especially with respect to some tempers, which are more likely to be kept, within strict bounds, by this kind of *rough* discipline, than by the *calm* remonstrances and admonitions of reason: I must still recommend it in general, as a most fit and beneficial rule in parental government, to avoid (as far as is possible) *all* measures of *severity*, and try to influence their dispositions and manners, by more *unconstraining* and *generous* motives. For a rigid discipline may *repel*, but it is not so likely to *cure* and *reform*, a perverse and evil temper. If children can be determined, to a dutiful and virtuous conduct, by a sense of ingenuity, or shame, the motive will be much more *liberal*, more *extensive*, as to every branch of religion, and worthy behaviour, and more *certain* and *lasting* in its consequences.

‘SHAME is a principle as original, and essential, to human nature, as *hope*, or *fear*. The being deterred, by the *indecency* of a practice, necessarily implies something of *virtue* in it, some degree of *reluctance*, and *horror*, at the apprehension of the vice itself.’ But there may be the restraint of *fear*, powerful enough to prevent outward *acts* of wickedness, when the *temper* of the
mind

mind is entirely depraved, and the vice, in the *habit* of it, *strengthened* and indulged.' And this is an undeniable demonstration, that severe chastisements are *only*, or at least *chiefly*, fitted in their nature, to hinder children from being *notoriously* and *shamefully* vicious; and that principles of religion, reason, and honour, are the *right* foundation of their *solid improvement*. 'Refrain from the rod, thereby to *inspire* the child with *sublime* and *generous* sentiments of morality,'—may, more frequently, be a *prudent* and *just* rule in education, than——'spare the rod, and *corrupt* and *ruin* the child.' Both, according to the *difference* of natural disposition, or of acquired habits, may be proper and necessary: But, in general, nature dictates to discard *force*, and *compulsive* authority, when it is possible to operate by *persuasion*; to inculcate, strongly, the *infamy* of ignorance and vice, the *reasonable* character of wisdom, the *intrinsic* excellence, and amiableness, of religion. These notions, carefully impressed, will *purge*, at the same time that they rightly *inform*, the mind; and *fortify* the temper, by suggesting powerful *arguments*, against *yielding* to the insinuations of *youthful* lust and extravagance.

I BEG leave to pursue this argument a little farther, as it is one of the *chief* things to be regarded, in the just instruction and discipline of youth, or rather, indeed, as the *cardinal* point, on which the whole of their proficiency in wisdom, and their future virtue and usefulness, *depend*. 'The question, then, is not, whether methods of severity may not be *sometimes* necessary—for this is allowed; but which, in general, is the *preferable* course—the rigorous, or mild, the compulsive, or the ingenuous and liberal education?'

To reduce and conquer *obstinacy*, the severer method, and even the infliction of *corporal* punishments, may be often right and fit: Nay, indeed, they seem to be the only means, left, of quelling and controuling an *intractable* spirit, that is averſe to all *reaſon*, and incapable of receiving *impreſſions* from it. But theſe, with reſpect to the whole, are *rare* inſtances, and are perhaps ever likely to be ſo; as the *firſt* temper of youth is, in the main, *ſoft* and *flexible*, if it be not hardened by an *over-fond* and *indiscreet* indulgence. And to propoſe a *plan* and *model* of education, which is ſuited only to more *uncommon* caſes, and not to the *generality*, muſt certainly be a prepoſterous and ill-concerted ſcheme.

A RIGOROUS diſcipline can neither inſpire a *love* and *eſteem* of virtue, nor a *diſlike* and *hatred* of vice; becauſe it can only *terrify*; but carries with it no *conviction* to the underſtanding, no addreſs of *influence*, or *perſwaſion*, to the moral faculties. It may impoſe the cloak, the form, and hypocritical diſſimulation of virtue; but has no immediate connection with *virtue itſelf*, either in habit, or practice. ‘The two principal therefore, if not the only grounds, upon which it can ever be juſtified, are theſe—That it may check and prevent *acts* of *exceſs*, fatal to the vicious perſon *himſelf*, and which may, alſo, be reputed a blemiſh and ſtain to the honour of his *family*, and are a real violation of the peace and order of *civil ſocieties*—And, that by deterring from the *exerciſe*, it may gradually break the *force*, of evil habits, which, as *indulgence* cheriſhes and confirms, *mortification* and *ſelf-denial*, whether *conſtrained*, or voluntary, may, by a parity of reaſon, weaken.’

WHERE

WHERE there is no likelihood of answering either of these ends, but the temper of the offender continues, after all, desperately and incorrigibly *fullen*, and neither *reason* will convince, nor *generosity* bend and mollify, nor *terror* discourage; and when *due* chastisements have been given, and continued so *long*, as is fully sufficient to maintain parental authority, and to serve for an *example* to deter others, from the like excesses of *stubborn* vice; it seems as if there could be *no use*, at all, in going on to punish such as are absolutely abandoned and irreclaimable: And a farther course of severe and harsh usage, from whence, in these unhappy circumstances, the *least good* cannot be expected, will, in the judgment of almost all mankind, have more of the *appearance* of stern power and cruelty, than of wisdom, justice, and good intention, in it.

WHAT has been, already said, relates wholly to rigorous methods, when they are in themselves *necessary*, and the *fittest* kind of correction of childrens faults. Permit me to add a few observations, besides what have been before suggested, concerning measures of severity, in all right and good education; and the *preference* of mildness and persuasion, and the way of more insinuating and engaging address, to the *tender minds* and *passions* of youth. This will plainly point out to *parents*, and *tutors*, what their duty and interest is; and how they may *best* attain the great *end* of their important trust, to their own honour, and the lasting advantage of those committed to their care.

‘ EXTREME severity in *paternal* government, like *tyranny* of all other kinds, *depresses* and *breaks* the spirits, and begets a *pufil-*

animous, abject, slavish mind.' It enervates the force of *resolution*, damps *emulation*, and *ardor*, the chief springs of wise and virtuous improvements; and of consequence, by establishing a habit of *servility* and *fear*, must, in a great degree, indispose young persons, even when they are arrived to a mature age, for great designs and enterprizes, for many of the social, and most generous, offices and pursuits of human life.

' IN some, it raises a *prejudice*, scarce possible to be ever afterwards subdued, against virtue, and against religion itself; for the sake of which, and to compel them to a strict and close observation of its laws, they have been so unmercifully and roughly *disciplined*. This, from having sadly experienced it to be the *spirit* of religion, in the *father*, they will be apt to imagine, for want of solidity of mind, and through the passion and hurry of youth, is its *natural* and *universal* disposition.

' OTHERS, again, severity, instead of bending to a compliance, *hardens*.' They grow more stiff and obstinate, through a *disdain* of rigour, and an *opposition* to tyrannical power. They may, perhaps, be induced to *retain* and *cherish* their vices, which have cost them such cruel castigation, with greater *affection*, and a more *determined* spirit. ' Or else, as the natural complexion and frame of mind differs, severity may inspire strong *dispositions* to, which may at length settle in inveterate *habits* of, malice and revenge. Or, finally, they may learn, from *example*, to be oppressive and cruel, when they come, themselves, to be entrusted with *authority*. And as even *pain itself*, by degrees, grows *familiar*, and the *longer experience* of it lessens the very *sense* and *feeling*, as well as the *fear*, of pain; this may diminish, and in a great measure root out, the *aversion*, with which they are inspired,

‘Inspired, by nature, to the being the *instruments* of misery and suffering to *others*.’ They may come to think more *slightly* of it, as an offence against nature, the authority of GOD, and the common principles and dictates of humanity; and so may allow themselves, in the commission of this horrid crime, the more easily, and with less compunction and remorse; especially if they are of a temper, that is *inclined* to be *stern* and *arbitrary*.

‘ADD to all this, that a too strict and severe education, and particularly the extreme, or too frequent, use of *corporal* punishments, has a direct tendency to inspire the minds of children, very early, with *degenerate*, *base*, and *mercenary* views. Where it is the principal method pursued, it can scarce fail of impressing, and rivetting in the mind, this *ungenerous* and *fatal* maxim; that the first and grand motive, by which they are to be influenced, even in *moral* offices, and with respect to *virtue* and *vice* themselves, are *sensible pain*, or *pleasure*.’

AND what can be the *consequence* of such wrong reasoning, before the minds of children are capable of discerning the *error* and *fallacy* of it, but the preventing entirely their due improvement, and the utter confounding all wise and religious education? Their being upon their *guard*, while the danger, and terror, of the punishment are *directly* in their *view*; but, as soon as these are *removed* at a greater *distance*, giving themselves an unbridled *scope*, in those instances of vice and extravagance, to which they are more peculiarly addicted? Or, if they rather choose to undergo the *pain* of the *discipline*, than that of *restraint* of *appetite*, and of being *abridged* of their darling *pleasures*; as long as they are acted by such *sensual* and *grovelling* principles, they will go on, without
controul,

controul, notwithstanding all measures of *severity*, in a course of licentious and dissolute living.

LET *parents*, therefore, be strongly alarmed by these considerations, and excited to proper vigilance and circumspection; lest, by being *intemperate*, and *over-rigid*, in the exercise of their authority, they bring on the evil consequences above-mentioned; to the utter depravation of their *childrens* manners, and the destruction of *their own* comfort and peace of mind.

I CAN, by no means, be understood to insinuate, by any thing that has now been advanced, that *punishments*, as well as rewards, are ingredients not proper to be mixed with a *religious* or *liberal* education. On the contrary, besides the singular case of unperfwadable and stubborn vice, they are, in general (as has been, before, more than once allowed) highly necessary. No government can subsist, or at least be fully supported, without them. And though an ingenuous temper, and the love of virtue for itself, be the *best* springs of action; yet it is a wild scheme, to attempt to influence mankind (in a world where *virtue* is surrounded with *discouragements* and *difficulties*, and where the *examples* of *vice* are numerous, and the *temptations* to it very powerful, insinuating, and dangerous) by the *sole* efficacy of so *high* and *refined* a motive.

IN such a state of things, it is evidently fit, 'that the temptations to *ill* should be, in some measure, counterbalanced, by *contrary incitements*, and, as it were, *temptations*, to the practice of what is *good*: Addressed to the very same *principles*, and *passions*, in human nature, by which vice, generally, *introduces* itself.'

self.' And this is the more necessary, in the *first* rudiments and essays of education, when the *reason* of the child has but a small, and inconsiderable, energy, and the *insinuations* both of good and evil must chiefly be, by means of the *passions*.

' ALL, therefore, that I intend is, that *rewards*, and *punishments*, should be so contrived, and so *proportioned*, as to nourish and strengthen, as much as is possible, the sense of *ingenuity* and *honour*; that the *shame* and *infamy* of the punishment should be the *principal* circumstance, adapted to *deter*, and the *dignity* and *glory* of the reward, to *encourage*.' And, of *this kind*, innumerable instances may be easily found, that will operate as *effectually*, especially by the help of *use* and *habit*, as the lower and more mercenary principles.

BUT, in order to this, the *tempers* of children must be carefully studied, and what are their strongest and most prevailing *biasses*. If there are any *bad seeds* fixed in their minds, they should, as was observed before, with the utmost diligence and application, be *rooted out*. But if this cannot be effected, the next step is, to endeavour to govern and direct them *right*, and give them a *generous* and *virtuous* turn. By this means ambition, and many other passions, which discover themselves *early* in the minds of *youth*, may be very beneficially *conducted*, and made *subservient* to the most noble purposes.

THE greatest part, of what has been hitherto offered, may be applied to the business of education *at large*; the whole, of what remains, will be strictly confined to the serious *recommendation*, and to the proposing a just *plan*, of *religious*, the most important branch of all *wise*, and *useful*, education. Nothing else can
be

be so worthy of our solicitous, care, and steady attention. If the foundation be, *here*, rightly laid, we provide, in the surest manner, for our *childrens* future honour, and their happiness throughout the whole period of their existence; not for a low, fleeting, animal, but for a reasonable, moral, immortal life. We take the only method, to render all their other accomplishments, of learning, extensive knowledge, polite address, engaging and ingenuous manners, in the highest degree *graceful*, and *beneficial*; to *refine* their dispositions, *enoble* their views, fit them for offices of *society* and *friendship*, and urge them from the sublimest of all motives, and motives of the most certain and constant efficacy, to *laudable* and *great* pursuits.

IN a word, so far as the best *principles*, and the utmost *precautions*, of human prudence can avail, we guard those tender branches of the family (whom the GOD of nature, the universal parent, has especially committed to our *tutorage*, while they are *credulous* and *unexperienced*) against the dangerous snares of life; and those excesses of vice and false pleasure, which impair the health, and corrupt the manners of youth, often to such a degree, that they are never, afterwards, recovered to a due *strength* and *vigor*, either of *body*, or *mind*. 'And thus the *rational* workmanship of GOD is, in a manner, rendered abortive, and stifled in its very birth. It is *prevented*, not by any direct *fault* of its own, but before it becomes capable of distinguishing, rightly, between good and evil; it is prevented, I say, merely through its *misfortune*, in having been entrusted to the conduct of *unnatural* and *faithless* guardians, from so much as *aspiring* after any improvements of virtue and religion, and from ever *thinking*, in *earnest*, how it may *best* attain the end of its creation.'

AND

AND from hence it undeniably follows, that no man deserves, to such a degree, the character of a *father* absolutely *savage* and *cruel*, as he, who *entirely neglects* to instruct his children, in the knowledge, the grateful adoration, and serious reverence of *God*, and the eternal momentous principles of *virtue* and *true religion*. Such an one, who has no concern at all about their *chief interest*, in *time*, and to *eternity*, must (if he himself *believes* that there is a *God*, and that man, as to his *mind*, is of *nobler extract*, and allowed to form more *extended prospects*, than a brute) be quite a *barbarian*, alienated from the taste and feelings of humanity, and hardened against the tenderest sympathies of nature.

FOR he is the *instrument* of communicating a being, *weak, helpless, ignorant, unapprehensive* of danger in a great degree (for a considerable time, *after* reason has *first* began to display itself) and yet exposes it to innumerable, fatal, *hazards* of its virtue, and peace. Instead of endeavouring to point out to it its *duty*, and the paths that leads to *happiness*, its most pernicious *excesses*, and the high road of *dishonour*, and *misery*, he is stupidly *insensible* of its most pressing *exigencies*; ‘and acts, as if he had *directly* proposed it to himself, as his *chief end*, in being the *secondary* cause of its existence, to leave it to *shift*, as it *could*, destitute of proper admonition and culture, amidst the many *chances* that lay against its right conduct; or, which amounts to much the same, to devote it to *probable* vice, shame, and infelicity.’

AND is not such a behaviour excessively shocking to *reason*! to *benevolence*! to all *honest, sober* thought! to *rude* nature, as well as to *refinements* of philosophy, and the *divine illuminations* of the *Christian* religion! If children may be thus neglected, the

whole human race must have been designed, in the *first stage* of their lives, when they stand in need of the most officious attendance, and careful cultivation, to be *deserted* and *abandoned*; and consequently, to be placed, by nature, in those *distressed* and *forlorn* circumstances, to which, in all countries pretending to civility, and just regulations of government, only the children of the meaner and poorer part are exposed: ‘In *that state*, towards which, the *pity* of the *generous* mind *soonest* relents, as one of the most *deplorable* of all others, and as having a *singular* claim to its *succour* and *relief*.’

BRUTE creatures are, regularly, furnished with all the *aids*, that are necessary to the *purposes* of their *animal* life, under the never-ceasing *providence*, and *tutorage*, of the creator himself; whose *wisdom* animates the *instincts* of birds, and beasts, towards their *young*—even the most wild and rapacious: And *like* instincts are implanted, in the young ones of every *species*, to follow the *direction*, and improve the *helps*, which are afforded them by nature. But mankind (upon a supposition, that the conduct of the unnatural father, above-described, be in itself just) are all *Orphans*; exposed to the dangers of gross *ignorance*, and utter *irregularity* of manners, not only by their *immediate parents*, but by the *common parent* of the whole. They must, of consequence, with respect to the *culture* of their minds, and the right *formation* of their moral characters, inherit, *from nature*, all the *miserics* of orphans. But, most surely, this, instead of being his *original plan*, must be infinitely *detestable* in the eyes of that most perfect being, whose *tender mercies* are *over all his works* *; and who, to manifest his peculiar inclination to

* Psal. cxlv. 9.

assist, and relieve, those of his creatures, who are most *defenceless* and *indigent*, has expressly represented himself as the *widow's judge*, and the *father of the fatherless* †.

BUT I am not yet willing to drop this part of the subject, and shall therefore endeavour, farther, to expose the *vile* and *cruel* character of such parents, by setting the argument in a *comparative* light. Mankind are, almost, universally agreed, that for parents to neglect the *health* of their children, and to make no *provision* at all, or but a *scanty* and *incompetent* provision, for their *welfare*, and comfortable *subsistence* in this world, is a scandalous act of *inhumanity*, and setting both *nature*, and *God*, at *defiance*. If, in a *sickly* and *declining* condition, due means be not used for their *recovery*, to a state of more confirmed strength and vigour; if under their long, natural, *inability* to help themselves, they are not tenderly supported and cherished; or if the *relief* afforded (in these, and all other cases of distress) be not *proportioned* to the parents circumstances; if it be *extorted* by the fear of censure, and springs not at all from *affection*, and a sense of *parental duty*—there is scarce any man, but what would *censure*, and *condemn*. Nay, here, even the *unnatural parent*, at certain seasons of more *sober* and *cool* recollection, would be apt to condemn *himself*.

‘BUT *religion*, being an *internal* principle, not obvious to *sense*, and *eternity*, as to its circumstances, a *concealed* and *invisible* scene; *barbarities*, and *violations* of natural duty, with respect to *these*, are not so *grossly* discerned. Besides, the *offence*, in this last instance, is too common and general, upon which account,

† Psal. lxxviii. 5.

the *bulk* of the *world* are not so apt to *take notice* of errors, and neglects, relating to the *mind*; and the *parent* passes them over in *silence*, and *unconcern*, as points but little regarded.'

AND yet, most surely, in the true nature and reason of things, the not cultivating *religious* principles, and virtuous habits, is a crime of as much *greater* malignity, than that of not attending to, and promoting, the right discharge of all *animal* functions, as reason, and the sublime offices of morality, are *superior* to mere bodily exercises; as the just occupations of *men*, the supreme felicity of *angels* (to whom mankind, by their higher faculties, are nearly allied) are infinitely *preferable* to the utmost delights, that sense and instinct can possibly yield.

I now proceed, having sufficiently enforced, both on the principles of natural, and revealed, religion, the parent's *obligation* to discharge this part of his duty, to settle briefly the *general system*, and the *proper model*, for religious education. And,

IN the FIRST place, 'it is a rule of great importance, that the *religious* instruction of *children* be *plain*, and *intelligible*; not only adapted to their *age*, and *capacities* of reason, but to their *real degrees* of reason, and *actual proficiency* in knowledge. To teach them, *by rote*, things, of which they have no *understanding*, is exactly the same, with giving them *no instruction* at all. Nay, it may, sometimes, be attended even with worse consequences; because, the imposing upon them the *learning* of *words*, from which they can derive no information, no ideas at all, may infuse into their minds an *early deep* impression, that religion is a thing entirely *arbitrary*; from which, they can, reasonably, expect no more solid *advantage*, than a slave has, in obeying

obeying the will of a tyrant—*i. e.* the being, merely, exempted from *punishment*, without any rational hope of a *reward*. If they are obliged, for example, in the *first* rudiments, and exercises, of their reason, to learn, and *retain*, the following words, *viz.* that ‘Justification is an act of God’s free grace, ‘wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of *Christ* imputed to ‘us, and received by faith alone.’—— (without inquiring, at present, whether this be a *scriptural* doctrine, or not) most certain it is, that they might, almost as well, have been taught the pronunciation of a sentence in *Greek*, or *Arabic*, as a necessary article of *true religion*: Because, in *both* cases, they are obliged to learn *somewhat*, the *sense* of which they are entirely ignorant of; and which, the *parent*, the *instructor* himself, is, generally, unable to *explain*.

‘And, from hence, it necessarily follows, that the *instruction*, in principles of religion, should be *progressive*, and *gradual*, as the understanding grows *mature*, and *ripe* for receiving it.’ To *overload* a tender mind, breaks its *force* of *genius*, discourages its *application*, and may fix an inveterate *prejudice*, against religion itself. Many parts, especially of the *doctrines*, and *evidences*, of revealed religion, children seem, at *first*, to be not capable of comprehending: It is scarce possible, therefore, that these should establish any good principles, and dispositions, in their minds. And, because they experience nothing of this kind, they may, perhaps, be led to conclude that there is nothing of *real moment* in these things, and be *discouraged*, ever afterwards, from engaging in a *serious* disquisition into such, apparently, *dry*, *unprofitable*, speculations; against which, by *wrong* management, they have
been

been *early* prepossessed, as *perplexed* and *intricate*, and of but little importance to their *happiness*.

‘ANOTHER rule, therefore, to be observed in religious education is, to *begin* with those *first principles*, on which *all religion*, whether natural or revealed, is *founded*; and by which, alone, its authority can be *supported*, and *maintained*.’ From their own *senses* and *experience*, as soon as they become *capable* of exertions and operations of *reason*, youth may have easily instilled, and established in their minds, the *general notion* of a *first cause*. They have a *sentiment*, derived from *nature*, and confirmed by the *weakness* and *dependence* of their infant state, that they were not the *authors* of their *own existence*: They will soon admit this, also, of their *parents*; whom they see to be of the *same kind* with themselves, though advanced to *higher degrees* of strength, and perfection, in human nature.

THEY will therefore, without much difficulty, admit the idea of an *universal parent*, presiding over, and governing, all mankind: That they are bound to pay *him* a supreme *reverence*; that they owed to *him*, in their defenceless state of *infancy*, all the *supports*, and *accommodations*, of life; that *his government* is *mild* and *gracious*, and his *punishments*, when he is obliged to correct, *necessary*, and intended for *their good*; that he is a *witness* to all their *follies*; and that whatever *excesses*, they are either *ashamed*, or *afraid*, to commit, in the presence of their earthly parents, they should be much *more solicitous* not to indulge themselves in, under his constant *notice* and *inspection*. These fundamental principles, of *all religion*, may be explained, and *deeply fixed* in the minds of children, *as soon*, almost, as they are capable of being *instructed* in any branch of *knowledge*.

BUT

BUT their more *explicite* knowledge of the *character*, and *perfections*, of GOD, would be *best* infused by *degrees*; and may, perhaps, be more properly communicated, as *curiosity* prompts them to *enlarge* their views, and in answer to the *questions*, which *general discourses*, on these subjects, will naturally extort from *children*, than by *straining*, and *racking*, their understandings, and imposing *measures* of knowledge, to which, their faculties are not fully *adapted*.

BUT let not the character, of GOD, be ever represented in a *discouraging*, but always, in the *first* rudiments, and essays, of piety, in an *engaging* and *attractive*, light. Let him be *noted*, not for severity, but, chiefly, for condescension and mercy; that the love of a *father*, and not the servile dread of an *enemy*, may be established as the *first principle* of religion. Let not your general representations of religion *terrify*, but *invite* to a *cheerful* approbation, and acceptance of it. Impose no rigid *austerities*, no unnecessary *restraints* of innocence. Let not your *service* of GOD, your expressions and offices of *piety*, wear a *gloomy* and *melancholy* aspect, lest you inspire an *early aversion* to it.

AND with respect to the *evidences* of *Christianity*, in *particular*, open the minds of children by degrees. ‘ Endeavour to impress a strong sense of its *intrinsic excellence*, and *tendency to happiness*, before you engage their minds, in an attention to its *external proofs*; which, it requires a greater *compass* and *strength* of judgment, *fully* to discern, and comprehend.’

AGAIN, it ought to be our *first* care, to plant, in childrens minds, the *seeds*, especially, of the following virtues: Of *justice*,
sincerity,

sincerity, civility, submission, friendship, generosity, compassion, and mercy; that they may work themselves *insensibly*, and take *fast root*, in the flexible, pliant, temper, and habit of their nature, even while they are incapable, in a great measure, of *reasoning*, about *these*, or *any other*, subjects. And, here, I would recommend it, as most proper, to instruct them by *pertinent*, and *striking*, examples; whether couched under *apt fables*, and *allegories*, or such as have occurred in *real life*. And, by the same method, they may also be, in the most effectual, and forcible manner, taught the *odious malignant* nature, and *dreadful effects*, of the contrary vices of *fraud, envy, malice, and revenge*.

FINALLY, in their reading the *holy Scriptures*, it were greatly to be wished, 'that *such parts* were wisely *selected*, as are best *suit*ed to their weak, uncultivated, and inexperienced minds: Such *devotional* passages, as are most free from *figures*; and such *moral rules*, as these—*Whatsoever ye would, that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them* *—*Children, obey your parents* †—*As you have opportunity, do good to all* ‡—*Be clothed with humility; and gentle towards all men* §—*Put away lying, wrath, anger, clamour, malice, and forgive one another* ||:' And, to conclude this head, those *Scripture histories* should be, chiefly, recommended, which represent, in a *strong* and *affecting* view, the obligations of *early piety, benevolence, and goodness*.

'BUT let *parents* be, above all things, careful, not to inspire their children, with a blind, intemperate *zeal*, for any peculiar *system*, or *party*, in religion,' lest they prejudice their minds, both against the religion of *nature*, and *real Christianity*; or, at

* Math. vii. 12.

† Eph. vi. 1.

‡ Gal. vi. 10.

§ 1 Pet. v. 5. † Tim. ii. 24.

|| Eph. iv. 25, 30, 31.

least (which, yet, is a consequence, to be *guarded* against, with the utmost precaution) train them up in a habit of *contentious, angry, controversy*, and in a *bitter, narrow, and uncharitable* disposition.

THESE things, I have suggested, only as hints, and rough sketches, of a proper *model* for *religious, and Christian*, education. *Other* rules, equally just, may, without doubt, be added; but, I am persuaded, that these will be found, in *practice*, to be eminently *useful*—and ‘a more *effectual* guard, than the *common methods* of education have been, hitherto, found to be, against the dangerous encroachments both of *infidelity, and vice.*’

C H A P. VI.

Of the duties of children towards their parents.

IT is a most certain truth, and what ought frequently to be enforced as a kind of fundamental principle, that in points of morality, in which God is not to be considered as the *direct object* of the duty required, a serious regard to *him* is not however, nor can be in reason, excluded; because all the *laws* of *social* honour, justice, respect, and gratitude, bear the stamp of his *supreme authority*; and result from that wise order, and those mutual relations, which, *by his will*, subsists every where uniformly in nature, as the *ground* of the virtues which are more strictly human, or of those common interchangeable offices of kindness, and equity, which all men, without exception, are bound to perform. From the natural and universal obligations of *piety*, the transition is both short, and easy, to those of *social morality*.

AND, more particularly, from our duty to God the *universal parent*, we descend, as it were, immediately, and in the very next step, to those indispensable ties of duty, under which we are held to our *earthly parent*; which are founded, though not on exactly *equal*, yet on *corresponding* and *similar*, reasons—On a *natural right* of *jurisdiction*, and an *authority* derived from the very *relation* they stand in to us; on their *tender care* for our preservation and well being, and a variety of benefits conferred upon

upon us; all which loudly demand proportionable returns of *respect*, and *gratitude*.

AND because of the *affinity* there is, as to the general reasons from whence they both flow, between that religious veneration, solemnly, and most justly, rendered to the supreme father of mankind, and the affection and gratitude, that are due to earthly parents, this last branch of our duty is described, by *St. Paul*, by the name of *piety*; plainly intimating, that there is something *particularly* sacred and inviolable in it, and intending to *distinguish* it, as a virtue of a more refined and exalted rank, from all the other intercourses of gratitude, beneficence, and justice, which the great ends of human *society*, and *happiness*, require.

I HAVE reasoned hitherto downwards, from the parental *character* of GOD, and the *sovereign* honours which unalienably belong to it, to *that of inferior parents*, and its just claim of *subordinate* honour. But whence, it may be enquired, did it originally proceed, that the appellation of a *father* was so early, and has been attributed so universally, to the almighty DEITY? Whence could it arise, that it has been looked upon as one of his most *amiable* and *reverend* titles, exacting profound and humble *respect*, absolute *submission*, and affectionate and chearful *obedience*? Whence could this so probably spring, as from a *prevailing sense*, and *high esteem*, of paternal authority, and the *reverence* indispensably due to it, from motives of reason and ingenuity?—This, doubtless, shews us, what are the *genuine* and *undepraved* sentiments of human nature.

AND, accordingly, no duty has been less *obscured*, than this of the respect of children towards their parents; nor has the *in-*

fluence of any, within the whole compass of morality, been less *diminished*, by all the *corruptions*, gross *infatuations*, and *savage manners*, introduced among mankind. It has held its place, and been acknowledged, for the most part, to have a rank of pre-eminence and dignity, not only as far as *true religion* has been propagated, but under, almost, every form of corrupt and vile *superstition*. The *rude sense* of the *wild Indian*, the *improved reason* of the *Philosopher*, and the *Christian*, the *uncultivated*, and the *refined*, the *barbarous*, and the *civilized*, nations of the world have joined, unanimously, in asserting its obligation, as one of the primitive laws of *nature*. Nay, it seems to have remained, in times of the most degenerate *ignorance*, and where the *knowledge* of a DEITY could scarce be traced; as if it was a kind of insuppressible *instinct* in nature. Some of the wisest *lawgivers* have thought fit, in their institutions of government, to distinguish it by *public honours*, as one of the first bonds of human society; and the contrary crime has been the object of general *abhorrence*, and loaded with uncommon *ignominy*, as the mark of a most *profligate* mind, and a violation of *humanity* itself.

BUT I proceed to a more particular, and distinct, consideration of the subject. And the *whole* of *filial duty* is, in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, represented to us by the general term, *honour*: Which, in itself, is capable of *various senses*, according to the *different circumstances* of the persons, to whom it is to be paid. The *honour*, which it may be, upon many occasions, *fit* to confer upon an *inferior*, must, necessarily, in order to preserve a *propriety* of behaviour, and conform to the *establishments* and *constitutions* of nature (which are the only adequate *standard*) differ, in many particulars, from that which is *due* to

an *equal*. And this again, upon the same rule of propriety, must be very different from what a *superior* may *rightly claim*. Nay, where the offices required are the same in *kind*, offices, for instance, of affectionate *esteem*, and *gratitude*, they must vary either in the *manner* of their expression, or as to the *degree*, in which they are exercised: Otherwise, we shall destroy all order, and, by abolishing *every distinction* of rank and character, throw the scheme of nature into confusion.

AND, even with respect to *superiors themselves*, all honours, that are *justly* bestowed, must, of necessity, be *differently* measured—as the superiority is in its nature *greater*, or *less*; *accidental*, or *natural*; *temporary*, or *unalterable*. The honours, therefore, due to *parents* must, in the nature of things, be more *fixed* and *undiminishable*, because founded on *eternal reason*, than those which are due to any *particular order* of *magistrates*; whose authority subsists upon *spontaneous* and *mutable forms* of government: Since no *one single species* of government is necessary for the good of mankind, though *government in general* be necessary.

BUT, then, it is altogether as plain and certain a truth, that the reverence of *parents*, in every possible instance of *competition* and *co-rivalship*, must yield and submit to that of the *father*, and *lord*, both of them and of their children, *equally* the father, and lord, of both; and can be rationally *required*, and rationally *expressed*, in no other instances, than what are agreeable to the fixed *course of nature*; the *welfare of society*, under its several administrations of government (provided they tend, upon the whole, to universal happiness) and to the *will of GOD*, in *what way soever*, it be distinctly and plainly signified.

I SHALL

I SHALL only add, that, by the doctrine of revealed religion, and by the reason of the thing, filial honour is ascertained to *both* the parents; and with most apparent *equity*: Since the several offices, they are respectively obliged to sustain, afford an undeniable ground for *esteem* and *veneration*. And if, in any case, *one* parent has a *peculiar claim*, the *other* will be found to have a *singular merit* in some other respect, which may serve as a *counter-balance* to it.

WHENEVER, therefore, family *discords* rise to such a melancholy height, through intemperance of passion, or a stubborn disposition, that those, whose duty it is to regulate the affairs of it, and maintain quiet and harmony, are unhappily *alienated* from each other, and in a state of determined *opposition*; if, I say, in such a fatal confusion of all family order, a *father*, presuming on his *peculiar right* to dictate and command, should (though he thereby, in effect, undermines his own authority) order his children to flight, and behave with disregard towards, the *other parent*; such orders being *null* and *void* in themselves, as they tend to root out *natural affection*, and are destructive of *natural right*, children are not only *excused* in declining to yield obedience to them, but it is their *duty* not to obey.

BUT then, to shew that they proceed upon some good principles, and do not act from mere *capriciousness*, or *obstinacy*, it may be fit for them, *calmly* to *expostulate* with such an arbitrary parent, and offer their *reasons* with a *submissive* and *decent respect*: And, if they understand the true *ground*, and just *measures*, of their duty, or desire only to preserve an *uniformity* and *consistency* in their conduct, they will not, even upon such an occasion

caſion as this (though their *age* ſhould *authoriſe* them to uſe an ingenuous and honeſt *freedom*) diſcover any thing of *haughtineſs* and ungoverned *paſſion*, or which has the appearance of *inſolence* and *contempt*.

THUS much may ſuffice, for the general conſideration of the ſubject. In explaining it more at large, I ſhall treat of it under almoſt the ſame heads, to which it has been reduced, with ſcarce any *variety*, by the beſt writers, who have undertaken the diſcuſſion of it; becauſe this appears, to me, to be a moſt clear and natural method. The *honour*, then, which is to be paid to parents, not as a merely *inſtituted* and *arbitrary* ſervice, but as a debt of *nature*, implies in it — ‘*affection*, and *gratitude*; *reverence*, and *ſubmiſſion*; *concealing*, or *extenuating*, their *imperfections*, and *vindicating* their *personal honour*, ſo far as right, and the truth of the caſe, will admit; *obedience* to their commands, to the utmoſt extent of their *rational* and *juſt* authority; and, whenever it is wanted through a decay of their worldly ſubſtance, the infirmities of age, or any other of the incident miſfortunes or calamities of human life, affording them, in proportion to our *ability*, and *rank*, a *competent*, *caſy*, and *honourable ſubſiſtence*.’—Under theſe heads, the whole of *filial duty* will be comprehended; which I ſhall, therefore, briefly illuſtrate, in the order in which they ſtand.

AND, in the FIRST place, one, and a very conſiderable, part of the honour, which children owe their parents, is ‘a ſincere *affection*, and lively *gratitude*.’—But why, it may be aſked, is this ſtiled *honour*? I Anſwer, that though affection and gratitude may be exerciſed towards an *inferior*, ‘they are, however, not only a *real*, but a *ſingular* and *distinguished*, *honour* done

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to our parents, notwithstanding their unquestionable rank of *superiority*, and the natural *authority* over us, with which they are invested; because they are a *public acknowledgment* of their humanity, their affectionate care and condescension, of the graciousness of their paternal government, and the benefits we have received from it.

To *serve* from a grateful sense of *voluntary* and *unmerited* favours, and from a mere principle of *cheerful, filial* duty, is the most exalted honour, that any, even the highest orders of created beings, are capable of rendering to GOD himself; as it is a public evidence given, that he is not severe, and arbitrary, but propitious, and indulgent to his children. And if any being whatsoever chuses the *forced* respect, that flows from a *dread* of his superior power, rather than a *free* submission, founded on *affection*, and deliberate *choice*, he must, in his *dispositions*, and in all his *governing views*, be a tyrant, and not a father.

ALLOWING then an unfeigned affection, and grateful resentment of obligations conferred, to be an essential, and one of the most important, branches of that *honour*, which the *very best* of parents has a right to claim; the next thing to be inquired into will be, 'what is the true *ground*, and *foundation* in nature, on which it is *raised*, and by which it is *supported*?'

AND to this, let *children themselves*, notwithstanding their affectation of *independence*, and their *private disquietudes*, on account of interruptions in their fond pursuits of favourite pleasures, and the checks given to their loose and luxurious fancies, answer. I suppose them, now, to be arrived to some *clearness*, and *maturity* of understanding, or else they are *entirely subject* to parental govern-

government. Let them then, in a capacity to discern between good and evil, answer upon their consciences, and after solemn and grave deliberation, to the following questions.

‘ WHETHER (not to mention the instrumental communication of being by their parents, because it is not so clear, that that is generally intended as a benefit)——Whether, I say, the vast fatigue sustained, in nursing and cherishing their infant state; the making provision for them, with innumerable anxieties, when they were absolutely defenceless, and destitute of all other aid; the bearing with their peevish, capricious, and untractable tempers; the parents care, and expence, in their education; their solicitude to provide for their future subsistence; their restless days and wakeful nights, to secure them from impending dangers; the forming their manners aright (so intended at least, though the design might be unhappily frustrated by unforeseen accidents) the fixing their situation in life to honour, and advantage; and a very considerable part, at least, of all this goodness and care exercised, before their parents had any substantial proof of their dispositions, without any antecedent merit, and from natural, pure, disinterested benevolence——Let children, I say, answer, for themselves, upon their consciences, their sense of piety to GOD, and of natural duty, whether these things do not demand the most fervent affection, and an eternal gratitude. Which are ties not to be dissolved, by a stern, froward temper, appearing on some particular occasions; nor by mixtures of imperious conduct, unnaturally, indeed, interspersed, with this general scene of benevolence and obligation.’

BUT what are the particular methods, in which this honour, due from children to their parents, ought to be expressed? The an-

swer is obvious, viz. 'that they should serve them with *alacrity*, and strive, if possible, to *anticipate* their *commands*; that they should *conform* to their *orders*, and *regulations* of family government; that they be afraid of *displeasing* them, by taking, *publicly*, even such *liberties* as are in themselves *innocent*; and discover, in general, not only a disposition to be *observant*, in points of *duty*, but an inclination to *oblige*, in matters of *indifference*.'

AND *parents*, in order to cultivate this excellent filial temper, 'must be *mild* and *accessible*, and, as their children, grow in *years*, bring them more upon a *level* with themselves; and especially provide, in their education, for that great point of all, infilling into their minds solid sentiments of *wisdom*, and *piety*; of which, they will soon perceive the vast and eminent advantage; and be disposed, ever afterwards, to testify the most sincere and warm affection to those, whom they will find, by *experience*, to have been, by their prudent care, the *chief instruments* of their *highest felicity*.'

THE next thing contained, in the *honour* due to parents, is '*reverence*, and *submission*.' This, it may be thought, more exactly *suits* with the idea, that is generally affixed to the word honour, than what was mentioned under the foregoing head: But the true ground of the *affection*, *gratitude*, and *reverence* is, in reality, much the *same*; and *neither* of them can be *separated* from the *other*, without weakening, or destroying the *whole*.

THE generality of mankind are, indeed, so misled by their pride, as to be fond of appearing in the *pomp*, and *state* of superiority:

riority: They can, therefore, hardly be persuaded, to think any thing a *solid* mark of *honour*, but what carries with it the face of *servility*, and *fear*. 'But it should always be considered, that there is a plain difference between *dread*, and *reverence*; and that the proper reverence of a parent, when it is carried to its most rational heighth, and shows the truest honour, is *nothing like the fear*, which a *slave* feels of an *absolute* and *rigorous master*; but the *humble veneration* of one, in whom the characters of *protector*, *friend*, and *governour*, are all united.'

AND what, now, are the *reasons*, which prove this reverence, and submission, to be a natural and indispensable *duty*? They are, several of them, *such*, as require no depth of judgment to comprehend; but what *children* of all *ages*, who have arrived to a *capacity* of thinking and acting *morally*, may discern the *weight* of: And the *others* will appear, to have an undeniable *force*, to those who are at all *used to reflection*. The *first* sort of reasons, and which are *obvious* to children, whose *faculties* are *open to distinguish* good and evil, but not yet come to *perfect maturity*, are,

'THAT the GOD, who gave them their being, their *supreme* and *heavenly father*, whose dominion is unlimited, and uncontrollable, has made them *subject* to their *earthly parents*, by the established *law* and *order* of human nature: So that a *disrespectful carriage* towards them is, indeed, an offence against *nature*, an irreverence offered to GOD himself.'

AGAIN, they are, *naturally*, under the *protection* of their parents, who are to defend them from danger, and provide all

things necessary and convenient for them, ‘and the *power*, ordained by nature to *protect*, must be *superior* to those, who are ordained to be *protected* by it. The protection afforded must not only claim a return of *gratitude*, but of *reverence*, and *honour*.’

ADD to this, that parents were not only *appointed*, by the infinite wisdom of the GOD of nature, to be their childrens *guardians*, in the manner already mentioned; ‘but are invested with an *authority*, to mould and fix their tender passions, and regulate the dispositions and habits of their minds. But if parents were *generally* disregarded, and treated with contempt (as they might, indeed, be *universally*, if it was lawful and allowable in any *single* instance) they would, probably, be *discouraged* in exercising those offices of *affection* and *prudent care*, on which not only the *good*, but the *very continuance*, of the human species, in a great measure depends.’

OTHER rational grounds, of reverence and honour to parents, are——‘that, in *families*, the *first manners* of *society* are formed; that they are a kind of *seminaries*, in which persons are designed to be trained up, according to the various ranks and distinctions of mankind, for *use* and *service* in the *greater world*; and that these excellent purposes cannot possibly be answered, if family *order* be not *preserved*; nor can the least *shadow* of *order* be maintained, if the *authority* of *parents* is not revered, and submitted to.’ I have chosen to join *submission* to *reverence*, because, in the present case, it is a natural consequence, and one of the truest demonstrations, of it: And I distinguish *submission* from *obedience*, and range it under another head, because it is possible,

possible, that *submission* may be shewn in many respects, where there is no *command* given, and consequently, where, in the strict sense of the word, there can be no *obedience*.

IT is now proper to enquire, how this reverence and submission to parents is, in general, to be *expressed*; and what are the *proper measures* of it. And to this I answer——‘that the *manner* of expressing it will differ something, according to the *age* of children, and the *degree* of their *subjection* to, and *dependance* on, their parents. Those who are *incapable* of *choosing* for themselves, and want sufficient *strength* of *reason*, to direct and regulate their own behaviour, are bound to a more *absolute* and *implicite* submission, than others, who are grown up to some *ripeness* of age and understanding, though still continuing, as being a part of *their family*, under the more immediate *tuition* and *government* of their parents. And these, again, are obliged to *submit*, in several instances, where it cannot be rationally *required* of such, as have *distinct families*, under their *own care* and *regulation*; and who, their *circumstances* being, upon that account, in a great measure *altered*, must, of course, be in a more *free* and *independent* way of life.’

BUT, notwithstanding what has been now said, the more material expressions of reverence and submission will remain, in *general*, very nearly the same. ‘It is incumbent on all, without exception, to treat their parents with all due *outward marks* of honour; to comply, as far as is *possible*, with their inclinations; never, when they are obliged to *dissent* from their judgments, to do it with an air of *pride*, and *obstinacy*; to *yield*, in all debates about *indifferent* matters, when they see them peremptory and determined in their opinions, rather than provoke, and raise their
passions,

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passions, by *stiffness*, and a *contemptuous opposition*; and, in every age of life, not to affect an air of *absolute independency*, or put themselves upon the foot of a strict *equality* with their parents; but to bear with their *infirmities*, and attend to their *counsels*, and *admonitions*, with *modesty*.'

AND this part of their duty, it is reasonable to suppose, that children, in general, will readily perform, if *parents* rightly discharge *their* duty. 'Would they be revered, as their *place*, and *character*, and *superiority* demand—let them reverence *themselves*, and study to maintain their *dignity*, by being *temperate* in their passions, and *discreet* and *irreproachable* in their conduct. Let them not render their own rank *mean*, and *despicable*, by capriciousness and levity; by a weak, variable, inconsistent temper; by being guided, chiefly, by unaccountable humours, and sudden starts of fancy; and appearing to have no uniform and steady rule of action. Let them not, by manifesting a want of *resolution*, upon all proper occasions, to *assert* their authority, and *quell* stubborn opposition to it, encourage insolence, and put the *reins* of *government* out of their own hands.'

BUT I dismiss this head, and go on to another branch of that *respect*, which our parents have a natural right to claim from us——'and which consist in *concealing*, or *extenuating*, their imperfections, so far as justice, and the truth of things, will admit of. Not to make this *small return*, for the great and important benefits which we have received, must argue a most ungrateful and degenerate disposition. It is a debt we owe to a *common friend*, nay, in some measure, to a *stranger*; and shall we deny it to those, to whom we stand in one of the first of all *human relations*,

relations, and are united by the strictest and closest *ties*? *Reason*, and all principles of *virtue* and *honour*, must then have forsaken us, and have left us quite stupified, and insensible of moral obligations.

BUT if instead of acting, in the manner which I have above described, we *join in reproaching* our parents, and *voluntarily exposing* either their *indiscretions*, or *vices*, this is such *unnatural* wickedness, as must render us justly, and universally, *detested*. This crime, on account of its *heinous* guilt, is represented, in the holy Scriptures, as what renders us liable to the peculiar displeasure of almighty GOD: And for *thus publishing* and *ridiculing*, instead of concealing and covering, his father's *nakedness* and *shame*, was *Ham*, the son of *Noah*, devoted, by a wise decree of providence, to a very signal and remarkable judgment; which did not terminate in his *own person*, but, in its natural consequences, extended to his *posterity*.

I SHALL only add, that let children be influenced by ever so high a spirit of *generosity*, and discharge their duty, in this respect, with the utmost *exactness*, it would still be infinitely better, for parents not to render such a *palliation* of their *faults*, and *defence* of their *honour*, in any degree *necessary*: Because neither the world in general, nor their children in particular, can retain a thorough *esteem* of them in their minds, while their behaviour is such, as stands in need of *excuses*, and laboured *apologies*.

THE next part of the *honour* and *regard*, which is to be shewn to parents, is this——‘ that, whenever it is wanted through a decay of their worldly substance, the infirmities of age, or any other
other

other of the incident misfortunes and calamities of life, we afford them, in proportion to our *ability* and *rank*, a *competent*, *easy*, and *honourable subsistence*. This is an act not of mere benignity, not a free and voluntary office of charity; but a branch of *gratitude*, and *just retaliation*. St. Paul, therefore, has represented it as a great duty of religion, and unchangeable morality, when he says, *if any widow have children——let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: For that is good [intrinsically, and in its own nature, good] and acceptable before GOD**.

AND our blessed Saviour, in a very remarkable passage (in the 15th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel) has expressly included *this case*, within the *intention* and *scope* of the fifth commandment. His words are——GOD hath *commanded, saying; honour thy father, and thy mother; and he that curseth father, or mother, let him die the death. But ye, hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, ye Apostates*, not from religion only, but nature, lay so little stress on this eternal and sacred law of the DEITY, that ye are not ashamed to declare, and teach publicly, that *whosoever shall say to his father, or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me [i. e. if any man shall have bound himself, by a solemn impious vow, not to relieve his parents necessities, or has superstitiously consecrated to pretended religious uses, what ought to have been applied to their support and maintenance] he shall be free, notwithstanding he honoureth not his father, or his mother †*.

HERE it is most obvious, that the censure of *Christ*, passed on this vile perversion of the law of GOD, implies, as the very

* 1 Tim. v. 4.

† Matth. xv. 4, 5, 6.

foundation of it, that those who refused (whether from motives of *false religion*, or of *covetousness*, and *luxury*, it makes no difference) that those, I say, who refused to allow a *subsistence* to their parents, in proportion to their capacity and fortune, did not yield them *necessary honour*. Maintenance, therefore, must be essentially included in it; or, otherwise, it might have been paid (which, our Saviour asserts, it could not be) notwithstanding they were *deficient* in this article. And reason itself strongly speaks the same language, *viz.* that to say to parents, *we honour you*, without affording them, when it is in our power, the means of *easy and honourable living*, is like the instance, St. James * has given of a rich man, who has many superfluities, saying to the naked, and hungry, be ye *warmed*, and *filled*, though he *gives them not those things, which are needful* for their bodily wants. It is, in both cases, either most senseless, or most impudent, *mockery*; an insult on the *distressed*, and a ridiculing *charity* and *justice*.

THE *exact proportion*, indeed, which ought to be set apart for these great purposes of *filial duty*, no moralist can precisely fix: But if it be *penurious*, and greatly *inadequate* to our circumstances, we may be sure in general, that GOD will not regard it as an act of *virtue*, and it must, in itself, be a *vile and despicable* offering. ‘And this I will venture to affirm, that if while we are *lavish* in the pursuit of *pleasure*, and while we wanton in a *profusion*, and *excess*, of worldly *pomp* and *splendor*, we content ourselves with assigning, to our parents, but a *strait* and *bare* subsistence, our *duty* appears, undeniably, to be the *last*, and *very lowest*, consideration, that weighs with us: And if, at any

* James ii. 16.

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time, we are *ashamed* to be *seen* with our parents, on account of the *meannefs* of their *habit*, and *general accommodation* (which is a *baseness* of mind, beyond my power fully to describe) it can only be, either because our *pride* has swollen us up to vain and high *conceits*, above our *true condition*; or our *avarice*, and *sordidness* of temper, have *hardened* our hearts against the dictates, against the reverend and soft impressions, of *nature*.'

THE LAST head to be considered is, 'the *obedience*, due from children to their parents.' — To treat of this distinctly and clearly, and in such a manner, that what shall be offered may be applied readily, and without confusion, to the most important cases, which may happen in the course of parental government, is a matter of no small difficulty; and, accordingly, the best moralists have, especially in their *application to cases* that occur, and, in some degree, as to the *extent* of the *obedience* itself, determined variously. 'The *constitutions* and *customs* of countries, fixing the *standard* of what is, in this respect, decent and fit, *differ*. The *very rule* of right conduct is oftentimes *perplexed*, and requires sedate judgment, and calm deliberation, to *adjust* it. And *fancy* and *passion*, always blind, wild, and stubborn, asserting their right to *decide*, thrust *reason* out of its native seat of *judgment*.'

IT is, in an especial manner, the nature of passion and obstinacy to propagate themselves: 'And, from hence, arise *aggravated* claims on both sides; demands of *extravagant abatements* on the one hand, in proportion to the *excess*, of *rigidness* and *exaction*, on the other.' So that as nothing so strongly inclines the parent, fond of power, and the ostentation of it, to stretch his authority even to *tyranny*, and till it becomes quite
odious

odious and *insupportable*, as the perverse, and contemptuous, carriage, of an insolent, undutiful child; there is scarce any thing, which so certainly engages children, disposed to be licentious, and wishing to get rid of all controul, in schemes of *disobedience*, and *opposition* to the *real authority* with which they are invested by GOD, as the severe and cruel government of indiscreet and arbitrary parents.

THE point, therefore, must be coolly stated, and reduced, in the case of each, to a rule of *propriety* and *moderation*; because, when things are pushed to *extremes*, they will of course dissolve and break, and defeat, their own fond purposes, at the same time that they subvert the wise order of nature. 'For it cannot, in reason, be expected, that the *authority* of parents will be *honoured*, or, indeed, that it will long *subsist*, when it is not their own *proper authority*, but an *usurpation*; or, that the *obedience* of the child will be *free*, *cheerful*, and *constant*, when it ceases to be a *just* and *limited* obedience, and is converted into a state of *oppression*, and *slavery*.'

SAINT Paul, indeed, has urged this branch of filial duty, as an unalterable tie and obligation of *nature*, as well as of *Christianity*: And he has done it, too, in the largest and most extensive terms; as if it was a conduct ever *uniformly* and *inflexibly* the same, or that could, upon no occasion whatever, be *dispensed* with. For thus he directs—*Children obey your parents, in ALL things* *. But it must be remembered, that the exhortation cannot fairly be understood in the same latitude, with the words *all things* absolutely and strictly considered; because *the*

* Col. iii. 20.

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all things, here spoken of, are of necessity *limited*, by being *restrained* to a *particular subject*. It is not the *importance* and *force* of the phrase itself, but the *nature* of the case to which it *relates*, that is the just *measure* of obedience, and the true *rule* of interpretation.

AND this the reason, the common sense, of mankind, in almost all other *parallel* instances, will readily admit. They universally allow a *greater* or *less scope* to the *sense* of the *self-same* expressions, according to the *quality*, or from the *different reasons*, of the particular subjects, to which they are applied. 'Thus, should it be said—*be just to all*, or, *render to every one his due*—it must plainly appear, that, here, it is not from the mere abstract sense of the words *every one*, but from the nature of the *duty itself* required, that we judge the exhortation to be *universal* and *absolute*: Because when we read—*give to every man that asketh of thee*—though the latitude of *expression* be the same, yet the latitude of *meaning* neither is, nor can be, the same. The *reason* of the injunction, in the latter instance, equally forces us to *restrain* it within certain *bounds*, as it did, in the former, to admit the direction to be *unlimited*.'

So again, 'if it be equally the subject of a command, to *obey* GOD, *parents*, *magistrates*, *masters*, in *ALL things*, there is no way to prevent these different precepts, from incurring the charge of a *contradiction* and *inconsistency* utterly irreconcilable, unless it be by allowing, that there is but *one* authority, which is *supreme* and *absolute*; and *enlarging*, or *reducing*, the *obedience* in each particular, according to the natural just *order*, and *rank*, of superiority. Besides, if there is but *one supreme*, all the other *powers*, being *derived* and *subordinate*, must, from their very nature,

nature, be *limited*; and all limitation of *power* necessarily infers, in an equal degree, a restriction and limitation of *obedience*.'

FROM all which premises it is undeniably certain, that the Apostle's exhortation to *children*, above-mentioned, can possibly mean no more, than that they should be *obedient* to their *parents* in *all* cases, which lye within the proper *scope* and *influence* of parental authority; or, in other words, in *all things*, which they can *reasonably* and *fitly* require. It may, perhaps, be oftentimes prudent, and best upon the whole, to *yield* (when nothing is insisted upon, that is absolutely *evil*, or that interferes with a *superior tie*) though there be, strictly speaking, no *right* to demand obedience: And there neither is, nor can be, such an intrinsic right in *any authority*, when it *exceeds* the *bounds*, prescribed and fixed for it in nature, and is *arbitrarily* and *wantonly* exercised.

ADD to all this, that the very same general account, and explanation, of the subject may be fairly deduced from St. *Paul's* saying, with a view to *enforce* the *obedience* of children (as he had before described the *extent* of it) that it was *well-pleasing unto the Lord* *. 'For could such an *unlimited* obedience, as confounded all the *natural differences* of things, all *powers*, all *claims*, be acceptable to that infinite wisdom, which *saw*, which *approved* of, which itself *ordained*, those outward *distinctions*, from whence different rules of conduct must, always, necessarily spring? Can it be agreeable to him, upon the sole ground of *words*, literally, and without reason, interpreted, to introduce *disorder* into the *moral, social*, part of his creation, and

* Col. iii. 20.

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subvert the established schemes of his providential government?’

THE same Apostle therefore, in his epistle to the *Ephesians*, has varied the form of the exhortation thus: *Children, obey your parents in the Lord*,—i. e. so far, as is consistent with that high veneration, which, as *professors* of the *Gospel*, ye owe to *Christ*, and, as *men*, to the *supreme parent* and *ruler* of all intelligent beings; in *every thing*, that is an *instrumental part* of his universal government, in nothing *beneath*, or *beyond*, it.

SHOULD it be inquired, farther, why the universal obedience of children, to which St. *Paul* intended to exhort, is represented as a thing *well pleasing to God*; he himself has immediately given the direct, and the only pertinent and satisfactory, answer that could be given, *viz.* that *this is right* *. In the reasonable, equitable, and gracious government, even of the supreme *monarch* of the world, nothing is *enjoined*, but *because* it is *right*, nothing *accepted*, as a mark of *due reverence* and *honour* in the *subject*, but what is *performed* from a *sense* of its being *right*. But is it right in children to *obey without reserve*? Here let us hesitate, and fix our *ground*: And, upon this general foundation, let us proceed to consider, more distinctly, what are the just *measures* of parents *authority*, and, of consequence, the just *limitations* of childrens *obedience*.

· THAT there is a *real* authority lodged in parents, the frame of nature (as we have already seen) plainly indicates; and all nations, and ages, of the world have acknowledged it. There

* Eph. vi. 1.

are images and faint copies of it (so far as relates to the preserving, and training up, their young to a state of maturity, and aptitude to provide for themselves) throughout the *animal* world. To *them* is assigned (and it is an instinct deeply fixed, and impressed on their several natures) the care of guarding, and nurturing, the tender helpless state of *animal* life; and of *instructing*, too, in *those offices*, which are necessary for the *support* of the *species*.

‘BUT *authority* differs greatly from *instinct*; and must have *reason* both as its *foundation*, and *guide*. *Man* alone, therefore, in the external visible world, being advanced to this *rank*, and endowed with the *capacities* for a *voluntary wise* administration and government, can be properly said to be entrusted with *authority*.’ And, without admitting this authority, in *parents*, to be an indispensable *right*, derived from *nature*, there is no provision left for the *regular* and *decent* education of children—in a manner *suit*ed to their *moral* powers; to their *social* propensities and affections; or to their peculiar *situation*, and *order*, in the *scale* of human life.—‘Thus the most important *end* of institutions of *family government* (which is the cultivation and improvement of the human race, and continuing its *successive descent*, with *usefulness* and *honour*, throughout all generations) is, in a great measure, *defeated*: And, in consequence of this, all *other societies* are likely, in time, to *dissolve*.’

BUT, besides this, it is highly worthy of notice, that the education of children, from whence *parental authority* derives its chief sanction, is enforced on mankind, with distinguished weight and energy of reason, by ‘the *singular constitution* of human nature.’ The several tribes, of *animals*, soon arrive to that
state

state of *perfection*, which is necessary for the future support and regulation of their lives; so as to answer, *completely*, the end of our common creator. ‘But *man*, as a more refined and elaborate work of God, arrives at this point but *slowly*.’ His defenceless condition lasts much *longer*, than the entire sensitive *existence* of many other creatures; and his inability, to provide for himself, is vastly *greater*. This is a demonstration that God intended, that the *parent, man* (by the exercise of due benevolence, and tenderness towards his offspring) should raise *moral habits*; while the other creatures, inferior to him, are mechanically, and without thought or virtue, influenced to fulfil nature’s laws. ‘And after *reason* has first began to display itself in *loose languid essays*, and *casual incidental mimickries* of wisdom, and sound judgment, it lingers and is long *detained* in this school of *trifles*; before it is capable of discerning points of solidity and moment—relating to *itself*; to those in the *same station*; to others of a *different rank*, and *character*, in human nature; and to the *common father* of all.’

To prevent the evils, that will naturally result from these things, *romantic schemes*, if *fathers of our country*, may, indeed, be assigned in *theory*: ‘But, unless the *plan of policy*, in almost all nations, be entirely *changed*, and just and honourable, rather than servile partial, *views of public administration*, be *pursued* as the invariable rule of conduct; an *improper, unnatural*, education, and the *despotic confusion* of all *private property*, are most likely to be the *consequence*. And, thus, *justice* itself will be converted into a mean *tool of political interest*.’ So that this general conclusion remains, I think, still plain and indubitable, *viz.* that parents are invested with an authority over their children, that is *natural*, and, upon the whole, *unalienable*.

BUT

BUT it must fully appear, from what has been before, incidentally, suggested on this head—that if there be any *sacred inflexible* ties of social morality, if there be, in nature, any *prior* obligations, if there be any *superior* power, *this authority* of parents must, of necessity, be *circumscribed*.—The rules, for conducting the exercise of it, cannot, in the nature of things, be *absolute*: Nor, whatever *deference* they may, in *prudence*, demand, in virtue of the *customs* or *laws* of particular countries, can they, on that account, be deemed inviolable; because these customs and laws are mere *human* ordinances, and consequently, all *fallible*. ‘Accordingly we find, that even in the morals of the ancient *Roman* state, so highly extolled, and set in opposition to *Christian* precepts, for scarce any other reason but that the *latter* are *Christian*; we find here, I say, that exposing *children* to *sale*, upon the foot of *other branches* of a man’s *property*, and as *slaves*, by *nature*, has been admitted and established as a *law*: And, upon the same foundation, *other institutions* have, likewise, been introduced, equally *repugnant* to reason, and nature.’ Let us now go on to state, more particularly, the measures of *parental* authority, and the just limitations of *filial* obedience.

AND, FIRST, ‘It must be *confined* (in both cases) to things that are, in their own nature, *lawful* and *fit*; otherwise, it makes all religion and morality *self-destructive*, by being a *contradiction* to itself.’ The law of nature is an *universal* tie; and it is, therefore, impossible, that any *particular branch*, of this law, should dissolve and evacuate the *whole*. No *one* article of *right* ought to be so interpreted, as to undermine *all right*: But,

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on the contrary, all parental *powers* are, in their nature, *subordinate* to the universal dictates of *equity*.

AGAIN, 'the authority of parents ought to be *disclaimed*, not only when it contradicts a determinate and express constitution of *nature*, but when it opposes any rule of *revealed religion*, apprehended, and acknowledged, *as such*.' Otherwise, we directly renounce our obedience and duty to GOD, and, in effect, assert, that there are *other indications* of his will, *more important* and *credible* than what, we ourselves acknowledge, to be *his own explanation* of his will; who framed the whole system of nature, and adapted it, in every part, to its peculiar purposes.

THIRDLY, 'in matters relating to *conscience*, children neither *are*, nor *can be*, absolutely subject to the *command*, and *imposition*, of their parents.' Indeed, in their tender years, and *want* of *capacity* to judge for themselves, they are, *so far* as this inability extends, entirely under the management, and controul, of their proper *natural superiors*. *Parents* may have a right to command (from the *usefulness* of public worship *in general*, to support all moral *virtues*, all regular and orderly society) their outward attendance on the *particular forms*, which they themselves chiefly *approve*: But, when children are capable of reasoning, and judging, for *themselves*, this is a *barbarous* and *tyrannical* imposition.

FOR to *constrain* any one, who scruples the *lawfulness* of it, to consent to my speculative creed, or acquiesce in my outward forms of religion, against *his conscience*, is forcing him to violate the *integrity*, and *innocence*, of his mind. And, if any parent,
either

either through ignorance, or usurpation of power, acts this *unnatural* part, he is, *virtually*, a rebel against GOD; from whom his own authority is derived: He, in a manner, imposes upon his children the *practice*, and, in consequence of this, the *habit* of *dissimulation* in all *common* affairs; and may be ranged, among the most pernicious *corrupters* of their *moral character*.

FARTHER, 'when *parents* require, of their *children*, things that are evidently *hurtful* to them, upon the whole, the latter can be under no obligation, to *comply* with their *injunctions*.' Because the parents authority, like that of all others, could never be intended to gratify the inordinate views of a *proud* and *inflexible* temper; but for the *advantage*, and *welfare* of those, who are *subjected* to it. I say things *hurtful* in themselves—because children will be apt to imagine, as general experience teaches, that they are intolerably *injured*, even by acts of necessary care and circumspection; such as the *controul* of *foppery*; the *confining* them to *business*, where there is an idle vain disposition; and the like. 'This is too much the *reproach*, and *bane*, of the present age; and will, I fear, through the too *easy tradition* of impertinence, superficial knowledge, and awkward, inconsiderate, indecent manners, be the *lamentation* of posterity.'

ANOTHER rule, which has been prescribed, by almost all writers on the law of nature and nations, to *bound* parental authority, is this, 'that what, the *parent* enjoins, must be consistent with the *public regulations*, and *laws*, of our *country*.' And thus, without doubt, it *ought* to be, when the laws of our country are *reasonable* and *just* laws: Otherwise, both *parents* and *country* are aliens from nature, from the community of mankind, and from the government of GOD.

‘IF the *laws* of our country prescribe *uniformity* of *opinion*, or *universal consent* in *one mode* of *worship*, which *nature* declares to be *impossible*; or if they command me to *assist* in any *breaches* of *justice*, or in any *offices* of *violence* and *persecution*; which has sometimes been the case, even in our own land, to the reproach of the virtue, and honour, of this *brave* and *generous* nation (who ought, therefore, to *detest* the *memory* of those *luxurious* *oppressive* princes, in whose reigns such acts of violence were first established:’) In these, and all other, cases of a like kind, our duty is most evidently this, to follow the *dictate* of *reason*, and not the *lust* of *power*; and to *obey* God, rather than *degenerate* and *savage* man.

BUT, in all instances, which are either useful or innocent, the public laws must be *preferred*, to the contrary injunctions of parents: ‘Because *families*, however important or numerous, are but *parts* of larger *civil societies*; and therefore, with the *exceptions* before claimed, their government and orders must be of *inferior* weight.’

AND from these general principles, *viz.* that the *authority* of *parents* was intended to enforce, only what is *fit* in itself; that it is not destructive of the *natural rights* of children; that it could not be designed to force *conscience*, or oppress *private judgment*; and that the ultimate scope of it ought to terminate, in the *mutual happiness* of parents and children: We may certainly, I say, collect from these premises, ‘that it can be no just part, of parental authority, to force children to a perpetual *vow* of *celibacy*; but that all such schemes may, and ought to, be *opposed* to the utmost of our power; because they are a mani-
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fest contradiction to nature, and to some of its unquestionable, and most strongly implanted, *passions*. They raise a violent *disgust* to religion, on account of its monstrous severity; ‘and instead of securing greater *simplicity*, and *chastity* of manners, tempt, in the most effectual and irresistible manner possible, to *incontinence*; nay, to unbridled excesses of *sensual impurity*.’

AND, FINALLY, ‘in the article of *marriage* (as the contracting parties are here, in reason, to be supposed, to have arrived to some maturity of *age*, and *understanding*) parents, I think, should seldom exert any acts of *power*, but choose, in general, rather to *persuade*.’—It is scarce ever adviseable, to attempt to *force* their childrens *inclinations*; much less, as the happiness of the latter is chiefly concerned in this solemn stipulation, to *constrain* them, by the weight of *authority*, to any *alliances*, to which there appears to be a *rooted aversion*.—Parents should contract no marriages, merely on principles of *avarice*, and *ambition*, for this most manifest and undeniable reason; that not *affluence* of wealth, not *eminence* and *splendor* of outward circumstances, but *reciprocal tender love*, is the only durable ground of *conjugal felicity*.—And farther, they should be always ready to dispose of their children, in marriage, *properly* and *honourably*, and to devolve upon them, according to *their rank* in life, a *fit* and *suitable proportion* of their worldly substance; that, through the *penury* and *rigour* of their parents, they may not be tempted, by a *rash* surrender of their persons, to bargain for disgrace and misery: And, besides, ‘this last is nothing more than a *debt of strict justice*; since *parents*, with respect to the *equitable distribution*, of *part of their estate*, just before mentioned, are not to be considered as *absolute possessors*,

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but as *stewards*, entrusted for their children.' If, therefore, they would force them to marry, where there is quite an *indecent disparity* of *age*; or where there is a *disinclination* on private motives, which is never likely to be *conquered*; there is a great deal to be urged, from *rights of nature*, to *extenuate* such instances, of childrens *seeming* disrespect and disobedience.

C H A P. VII.

Of the distinct obligations of masters, and servants.

I AM now to begin to treat of *relations*, and the *mutual duties* necessarily resulting from thence, which have not so strict a *connexion* with the very idea, and first rudiments, of human society, as the obligations of *husbands* and *wives*, *parents* and *children*; but may rather be considered, as *secondary* and *consequential* duties.

ACCORDING to the present constitution, and order of things, fixed by the unerring wisdom of the great creator, the institution of *marriage* was absolutely necessary, to the propagation and support of mankind, as a *regular* and *well ordered* society; nor could the *continuance* of their *nature* be effected in any other way, so becoming the *dignity* of their *rank*, and their *preeminence* of *reason*: Nor, again, could this sacred rite answer its first and chief *design*, without introducing the *relations* of *parents* and *children*. Both these, therefore, are inseparable, almost, from the character of *social humanity*.—‘But we can easily conceive of men in some state of society, before the distinct offices, and obligations, of *masters* and *servants* (especially as they are now understood) *had actually*, and, indeed, before it was possible they *should have*, taken place.’

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HOWEVER, though it appears, from what has been said, that the latter are but *subsequent* and *inferior* relations, ‘yet they are plainly grafted on *nature*, and derived from the same *original root*.’ For as there is a just sense, in which all mankind are by nature *equal*, because, if they had all been created *at once*, in *maturity* of strength and understanding, *each* member of the whole would have had the same *right*, with *any other* single person whatsoever, to *life*, to the *preservation*, and *comfortable support* of life, and, consequently, an equal *property* in the *common stock* of nature, liberally provided and ordained for their use; and because even *now*, and *for ever*, each individual, considered merely as *a man*, has an undoubted *claim* to the same *degree* of equitable and kind treatment, in the same *circumstances*; as all this, I say, is most obvious, and, upon principles of right reason, incontestable: So, on the other hand, it is too evident to be denied, that the providence, of the supreme disposer of all things, *designed* from the *beginning*, that as mankind increased, and multiplied into larger societies, they should be ranged into *different classes*, *different orders* and *degrees*, in a *subordination* to, and necessary *dependence* upon, each other.

‘THIS variety of stations and offices may be filed, in some measure, *accidental*: For thus it truly is *in general*, with respect to the *persons themselves*, who are fixed in *higher*, or *lower*, characters.’ It arose at *first*, perhaps chiefly, from *greater*, or *lesser*, *improvements* of the understanding; *extent* of useful knowledge; *diligence* and *application* to acquire a larger property; and *prudence* and *good oeconomy* to *preserve* it—from whence naturally spring plenty, influence, and authority in *some*, and dependence, and subjection in *others*. These *causes* will always
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continue, in many plain and visible instances, to produce the same *effects*, and create the same *differences*: Which may, likewise, be frequently owing to *accidents* of birth, family, friendships, or a particular *advantageous situation* in life, that others are deprived of.

‘ AND men of superior rank, and who are possessed of a larger substance, for their own *ease* and *better accommodation*, and to exempt themselves from *meaner* and more *laborious* offices, will immediately find themselves inclined, to procure the *attendance* and *services* of others; which the more *indigent*, or less *fortunate*, must be often obliged to submit to, to gain an honest and convenient subsistence.’

THIS is the *actual* course of nature, and flows from the *original* constitution of nature; it should therefore be regarded, ‘ as a *part* of the GOD of nature’s *wise plan*, for the more *perfect* regulation and government of mankind.’ Various capacities of reason, different talents, situations, and advantages for attaining to a superior degree, have been, from the first appointment of human nature, one of its *fixed* and *unchangeable laws*. It could, therefore, never be intended, that they should all *aspire*, nor was it possible they should all *rise*, to exactly the same rank; neither the order, nor strength, nor happiness, of society can be *duly*, if *at all*, maintained, upon this fanciful arrogant scheme of an universal equality. But if *difference* of *circumstances* be admitted as natural and fit, *servitude* must necessarily follow; and in proportion to the degree of *inequality*, will be the degree and extent of *servitude*. So that it may be as truly said of *this*, as of *authority* and *government* itself, ‘ that it is an *ordinance* of GOD.’

BUT, here, it is highly proper to inquire, in order to curb the pride and insolence of power, for what *purpose*, providence has contrived it, to be one of the *regular* and *stated orders* in human life? I speak not now of the *general end* of its institution, which, without doubt, was the *wiser government*, and *greater good*, of the whole; but of the *peculiar design* of it, with respect to *masters* and *servants* themselves, who are the parties more immediately concerned.—‘ Could this be—in a being of infinite goodness—the *case*, the *wanton luxurious ease*, of the one, at the expence of the others *misery*? The *state*, the *pomp*, and *false grandeur* of the *master*, to the *dishonour* and *oppression* of the *servant*? Could justice deal so *unequally*? Could wisdom deal so *arbitrarily*?’ No: A haughty contemptuous carriage, as if the inferior was of a distinct order of creatures; violations of mutual contracts, only because there is a power to do wrong; depressing the weak and indigent; and exactions of a rigorous and cruel service—are a direct contradiction to the rule, and example, of GOD’S sovereign dominion: And must therefore render, as the *greater tyrants* of the world, so the *petty tyrants* of families, *detestable* in his sight, and objects of *infamy* to all the reasonable, and generous, part of mankind.

SERVITUDE, it was observed before, admits of very different *degrees*; but there are chiefly *two kinds* of it, to which all the rest may be reduced. The first is what, some of the best writers on the law of nature and nations, have stiled *perfect*; the other *incomplete*, i. e. *free* and *voluntary* servitude. Those, who are referred to the last class, are *hired* and *contracted servants*; and those, under the first, *slaves*. These were, generally, *captives* taken in war; or the *descendants* of such, as were esteemed a
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part of the conquerors *property*; or those, who had *sold themselves* to a perpetual servitude—Of whose *strength*, and *labour*, and *persons*, even to the inflicting *death* itself for grosser injuries, and more flagrant breaches of trust, their masters, in these old times of *tyranny* and *disgrace* to human nature, were allowed to have the entire *disposal*.

I WILL not pretend to determine absolutely, as concerning a point that is most certain and indisputable, that man, by nature, can have no right *ever* to *transfer* his *services* (within the general rules of virtue and religion) entirely to another; and shall, therefore, only assert, ‘that such *perpetual*, even *voluntary*, servitude seems, to me, to be a plain *deviation* from the *general* scheme of the GOD of nature—who intended, that all his *reasonable* creatures should be *free*—*free*, indeed, in order to be *reasonable*—to exert the *capacities* of their nature without *reserve*—and enjoy its proper *happiness* without *limitation*, or *controul*.’

NOR shall I attempt to decide peremptorily, by laying down a rule adapted to all cases, ‘upon the instance of *captives* in a *just* *defensive* war, in which the persons *enslaved* were the *aggressors*, without a *sufficient* *provocation* to proceed to this extreme of violence, and effusion of human blood. Here, without doubt, some *uncommon*, and *signal*, *reparation*, is but a necessary demand of *justice*: And even *self-preservation*, and *self-defence*, may require, that we *detain* the enemy under our power, to prevent a *continuance*, and *repetition*, of injuries. And, in order to this *detention*, and to maintain our *superiority*, when providence has visibly declared itself in our favour, some *abridgement* of the

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natural liberties, and rights, of human nature may, oftentimes, be expedient and fit.'

BUT *generosity*, I think, ought, even here, to interpose, and moderate the rigour of justice. Mildness and condescension, are infinitely more *becoming*, than a harsh and cruel treatment. 'And if we have reason to believe, that we may safely *confide* in the *fidelity* and *honour* even of the *captive*——to restore him to the *freedom*, and *immunities*, of a *man*, must raise, in the mind, a much more sublime and exquisite *pleasure*; than to keep him *depressed* and *debased*, to the condition and employments of a *slave*, for ever *ignominious* to *human nature*.' Let us only imagine, in the present case, what we *ourselves* would think to be most *great* and *generous*, if we were in the like *abject* circumstances; and *slavery* would be generally abhorred, and seldom find a place, in the *free-born*, and *heavenly* nature of man.

THESE remarks may suffice, with respect to instances of *fer- vitude*, in which we, at present, have, for the most part, no concern.

'BUT, perhaps, it will be found, that the practice of *modern* times, in order to extend their *commerce* (which ought, in a proportionable degree, to propagate *benevolence*, and a more *uni- versal sense* of morality) is much more criminal, and a more outrageous violation of *natural rights*. Should we have read, concerning the *Greeks*, or *Romans* of old, that they *traded*, with a *view* to make *slaves* of their own species, whom, they certainly knew, that this would involve in schemes of *blood* and *mur- der*, of *destroying*, or *enslaving*, each other, that they even fo- mented *wars*, and engaged *whole nations* and *tribes* in *open hosti- lities*

lities, for their own *private advantage*; that they had no *detestation* of the *violence* and *cruelty*, but only *feared* the *ill success* of their inhuman enterprizes; that they carried *men like themselves*, their *brethren*, and the *off-spring* of the same *common parent*, to be *sold like beasts of prey*, or *beasts of burden*, and put them to the same *reproachful trials* of their soundness, strength, and capacity for greater bodily service; that quite forgetting, and renouncing, the *original dignity* of human nature, communicated to *all*, they treated them with more *severity*, and *ruder discipline*, than even the *ox*, or the *ass*, who are *void of understanding*—should we not, if this had been the case, have naturally been led to despise all their *pretended* refinements of morality; and to have concluded, that as they were not nations destitute of politeness, they must have been entire strangers to *virtue*, and *benevolence*.’

‘BUT, notwithstanding this, we ourselves (who profess to be *Christians*, and boast of the peculiar advantages we enjoy, by means of an express revelation of our duty from heaven) are, in effect, these very untaught and rude Heathen countries. With all our superior light, we instil into those, whom we call *savage* and *barbarous*, the most *despicable opinion* of human nature. We, to the utmost of our power, weaken and dissolve the *universal tie*, that binds and unites mankind. We practice, what we should exclaim against, as the utmost excess of *cruelty* and *tyranny*, if nations of the world, differing in *colour*, and forms of government, from ourselves, were so possessed of *empire*, as to be able to reduce us to a state of unmerrited, and brutish servitude. Of consequence, we sacrifice reason, our humanity, our Christianity, to an *unnatural sordid gain*. We teach other nations to despise, and trample under foot, all the obligations of *social*

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cial virtue. We take the most effectual methods, to prevent the propagation of the *Gospel*, by representing it as a scheme of *power* and *barbarous oppression*, and an enemy to the *natural* privileges and rights of men.'

PERHAPS all, that I have now offered, may be of very little weight to restrain this enormity, this aggravated iniquity, in our national *commerce*: However, I shall still have the satisfaction, of having entered my *private protest* against a practice, which, in my opinion, bids that GOD, who is the GOD, and *father*, of the *Gentiles* unconverted to *Christianity*, most daring and bold defiance, and spurns at all the principles, both of natural and revealed religion.

BUT though we wickedly, and from *degenerate* and *selfish* motives, concur in the design of *enslaving* the people of other countries, the same dreadful scourge (through the mercy of heaven, in forbearing to execute the just law of *retaliation*) is not yet felt amongst ourselves. Servitude, in this land of liberty, and of mild propitious government, is for the most part, if not altogether, an *unconstrained* and *voluntary* contract. And therefore the directions given to *servants*, even in the New Testament, must *now* bear somewhat of a *different* meaning, from what they did in the *first* age of *Christianity*; when servants were, generally, *slaves*. The *Gospel* justly considered, what was, at that time, the *real state* of things. It made no alteration either in the *natural*, or *civil*, rights of mankind; or in established property. This would have introduced universal confusion, and have raised an insuperable objection against its own authority, as if it subverted the laws of nations, and was intended to disturb the public tranquility. 'Hence, obedience

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was, in general, inculcated to *magistrates*, possessed of authority, if they attended, in *the main*, to the great ends of government; and respect and submission to *masters*, *actually invested* with power. *Servants* are therefore directed to *obey*—*with fear and trembling**, from a sense of their masters (though not in *reason*, yet by the *constitutions* and *laws* of their respective countries) despotic and extensive dominion; and to persist, steddily, in the discharge of this branch of their duty, *not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*†. But this is what, *contracting* servants can never be obliged to do, in an *equal* degree, whether from principles of religion, or equity. So that the exhortations, in the new testament, must be *differently* explained, according to the nature and quality of the servitude itself, and the customs and usages, that have prevailed in the different ages, and nations, of the world.—After this, which whether it be thought a digression, or not, must be of great importance, and closely connected with the general subject of this discourse; I beg leave to recapitulate, briefly, the general principles at first laid down, and to add some other remarks, as the proper introduction, to what still remains to be considered.

I HAVE, then, already shewn, that though there are some *general rights*, belonging to human nature (such as the rights of *conscience*, and the claims of *humanity*, *benevolence*, and *equity*; which are absolutely *unalienable*, and *common* to all) yet, it was plainly the original design, of the great contriver and maker of the world, that there should be certain *differences* and *inequalities*, likewise in the outward condition of mankind.—That the true constitution of things is vastly various, and, indeed di-

* Eph. vi. 5.

† 1 Pet. ii. 18.

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verified, almost infinitely, in every one of these respects—of *capacity, genius, advantages, situation, temper*, and the like.—That, from hence, necessarily spring *higher, and lower*, characters and offices; and that, among the rest, the condition and quality of *a servant* may be justly derived from this root; since it would have been impossible (without the exercise of a miraculous power, to suspend or alter the course of nature) but it *must* have resulted from it.

I now add, that, in all probability, it would have been introduced, by other, merely *voluntary* and *moral* causes; whatever was the *general* rank first intended for man. If it was an *unequal* rank—it might have been *raised*, as we have seen, by *acquired* judgment, wealth, influence, friends, by a proficiency in useful arts, and an uncommon share of application and industry; if more *uniform*, or more upon a *level*—it might have been *depressed*, and the uniformity *disturbed* and *broken*, by *irregular* follies and passions, which are ever wild and headstrong in their course, and tend to throw all things into disorder. ‘*Indolence*, itself, would have *sunk* the man, whom *diligence* and *care* exalt; *profuseness* would have *debased* the frugal: And, we all know, that there are many *luxuries*, which create a *dependence* of some upon others, in cases, where (if the wise and wholesome laws of nature had been strictly adhered to) such an event could *scarce* have happened; nay, which reduce, the unhappy extravagant, to such *mean* and *hard* offices of servitude, as *very few* are driven to, in the lowest *natural subordinations* of human life.’

BUT these things being, in a great measure, the effects of indiscretion and vice, I have just thought proper to mention
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by way of *caution*; but not as *direct proofs*, that a state of servitude is one of the *just regulations*, proposed, at first, by infinite wisdom, for the more *exact order*, and *better government*, of the world. The ill consequences of *intemperate passion*, and *wilful corruptions* of human nature, can only show us, in any case, what *disgrace* and *misery*, the supreme judge of right and wrong has been pleased to *connect*, as *restraints of terror*, with gross failures in the discharge of our duty, and violations of his sacred laws: But they can never point out to us, what is the *regular state* of things. So that, upon the whole, the difference of reasoning, in the two kinds of argument which I have now proposed, is this—in the *one*, we see, to what *dependence* and *servitude* mankind may be reduced, by *subverting* the scheme of *nature*—from the *other*, we may justly infer, that *servitude* must have *taken place* in various degrees, if the *law of our creation* had been ever so punctually *observed*.

AND, from the whole of what has been offered, it undeniably appears—that it must have *natural duties* attending it;—and that these must be equally *indispensable*, with any *other* natural ties, incumbent on mankind; and *necessary parts* of all true religion: Or, in other words, which will set the matter in a clearer and fuller light—‘ that there can be *no religion*, without *virtue*; no *virtue*, without a *conscientious observance* of *nature’s laws*; no *conscientious observance* of *nature’s laws*, while we *neglect* the *duties* of our *peculiar rank* and character, *i. e.* our own *immediate* and *proper offices*, which we are directly stationed and appointed to perform; and, consequently, that neither *servants*, nor *masters*, can cultivate a serious *veneration* of *God*, or cherish the rational hope of his *favour*, while the *one* are

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careless, corrupt, and fraudulent, and the *other* imperious, exacting, and tyrannical.'

BUT this leads me to enter, more particularly, into the subject: I, therefore, now proceed to discourse of the *servants* duty, under the following heads, *viz*—‘ That he should be *obedient*; *just* and *honest*; *frugal*; *orderly* in his *behaviour*; *submissive* and *respectful* in his carriage towards his master; not a *disculger* of *family-secrets*; that he ought not to *corrupt* the manners of the *children*, who are intrusted to his care and oversight, nor encourage them in *stubbornness* and *disobedience*; that no pretence of a superior purity, and zeal with respect to religion, should make him, in the least, *rude* and *insolent*, or *careless* of his masters interest; and that, as the foundation of a faithful discharge of *all other* branches of his *relative* duty, he endeavour to form his mind, as much as possible, to *ease* and *contentment*, under his state of *servitude*, and an *entire submission* to the wise disposals of providence.’ And, under each of these particulars, I shall endeavour to give an impartial summary of the *master's* duty, in a kind of *contrast* to that of the servants; that by being jointly represented, and appearing together in one view, they may illustrate and enforce each other.

THERE are, *now* especially, very high and strong complaints of the *sloth*, *wastefulness*, *insolence*, and *luxury* of servants; and, in an age *like this*, there is reason to fear, that, in too many instances, there is a *just* foundation for such complaints. ‘ For can *servants* be expected, to be examples of *innocence* and *frugality*, while *corruption* and *excess* prevail all around them?’ It were indeed to be wished, that *one rank*, at least,

least, might keep itself entirely clear of the spreading *infection*: But what is in itself *desirable* is one thing; what we may *reasonably expect*, unless, with one consent and effort, *all* could be induced to grow wiser and better, is another. *Servants*, it may for the most part be presumed, from their *education*, and fewer advantages to acquire *correct notions* of things, will follow the manners of their *superiors*. In some, it may lessen the uneasiness and fatigue of servitude itself, thus to *raise* themselves, in imagination, *above* their *proper* character. Others, less *aspiring*, or more *artful*, may hope to recommend and ingratiate themselves, by such an obsequious, slavish, though very *absurd* mimicry. The greater part may follow *implicitly*, from the same principle, which makes the generality *err*, even in the *choice* of their *religion*; *viz.* that what is *most followed* is *right*.

BUT, however this be, I am sure, that reformation, if it be any thing more than a pretence, if it be a *true mending* of the heart and life, must spring from a *higher* and more *influential* cause. And though I would not, in the least, excuse the faults and disorders of *servants*, who, in point of interest, as well as from their peculiar situation in life, have *less* to plead for several kinds of *extravagance*; and whose dependent condition should, especially, teach them the virtues of *humility*, and a greater *circumspection*; yet with what face of *justice*, with what *decency*, can *masters* so loudly complain, when the unbecoming *familiarities* and *freedoms*, which they themselves use towards them, encourage them to be *arrogant*; or their *own examples* prompt them to be *profane* and *dissolute*. ‘There is no possibility of reclaiming the *lower classes* of mankind, but by some *slow* and *affeetation*, at least, of virtue in the *higher*.’

ADD to all this, that servants also, whether it be from *reason*, or by way of *retaliation*, are apt, on their part, to complain. And their *complaints* have a right to be strictly *canvassed*: Their *wrongs*, if they are real, it is the duty of all *men*, of all *Christians*, (without exception) if they have been the *aggressors*, to *repair*. This reparation, without respect of persons, or any distinctions of outward rank, must be *full*, and *adequate* to the circumstance whatever it be. For if a man, a creature, a subject, of GOD be oppressed, the *righteous judge* will, doubtless, take impartial cognizance of the cause, *whether* he be *bond*, or *free* *. *The hire of the labourers* detained, and the *cries* of the defrauded servant, *enter into the ears of the Lord of hosts* §.—Whether, and how far, the mutual upbraidings and accusations are just; what is the true source of unreasonable charges; what the ground of real errors; must be entirely subjected to his omniscient tribunal. And the right method to be taken, either for preventing, or curing, all such violations of mutual duty; the whole of this, I say, will be best seen, by representing, briefly, the distinct obligations of *masters* and *servants*, in the same immediate point of view: Which method of treating this particular subject, I have therefore preferred, though it may be somewhat different from that hitherto pursued, in my discourses on relative duties.

THE FIRST branch, of the duty required of servants, is *obedience*: For, in general, obedience is most certainly due to all persons invested with authority; but the peculiar *degrees* of it must necessarily differ, in proportion to the *just extent* of the

* Eph. vi. 8.

§ Jam. v. 4.

authority,

authority, in every instance. *Wives* are bound to be in *subjection* to their own *husbands*, as well as *servants* to their proper *masters*, and yet the *offices* of subjection must be, in most respects, different. A *diversity* must likewise be admitted, in the case of servants themselves. Not to mention the condition of absolute *slaves*, which is abhorrent to human nature; ‘the obedience of *other servants* must be suitably regulated by the *express terms* of the first *contract*, or the *tacit stipulation* necessarily included, in the rational *scope* and *design* of it. Here the master, who is the best judge of his own affairs, must often have a *discretionary* power. Things which appear, to the servant, to be some *stretch* of authority, nay wholly *foreign* from the professed design, and uses, of his particular occupation, may, perhaps, be absolutely *necessary*. He ought therefore, I think, always to submit, where nothing is required, which is directly *inconsistent* with his contract, nothing that evidently *degrades* him below his rank, and is arbitrary, oppressive, impious, or dishonest.’

BUT what, now, is the duty of *masters*, if they desire to be properly *obeyed*? The general substance of it is very easy to be comprehended, consisting in the following particulars, *viz.* ‘to be equitable and gracious in *commanding*, candid in *censuring*, mild in *resenting*; and to enjoin such services, as are as *easy* as possible, and, in their direct consequences, plainly *beneficial* and *necessary*.’ For the duties on both sides are, in the nature of things, inseparable. *Tyranny* operates *here*, as it has been before observed to do in *other* cases; it begets *stubbornness*, and a constrained, careless, reluctant service: And an *unsubmissive intractable temper* has as direct a tendency, to produce, in the superior, arrogance of power, and an inclination to oppress.

INDEED,

INDEED, so far as the *first* of those characters (within the just bounds and limits of his obligations) refuses to follow the *directions*, and execute the *orders*, of his master, he ceases to be a *servant*, and places himself in a quite different situation. So far as he is disobedient and obdurate, he can have *no right* to his masters *favour* and *protection*. For such perverse and inexcusable conduct amounts to the same, as a direct *renunciation*, on his part, of the *mutual contract*: ‘Since, in the reason of the thing itself, there can be no material difference between my *absolutely refusing* to obey, or *yielding obedience* only in those instances, which best suit my fancy, laziness, or pride.’

THE same general reasoning holds true, likewise, on the *master's* side. If he debases his *hired servants* to mean indecent offices of *slavery*; if he is unreasonable in his *demands*, and denies them the *necessary accommodations*, which their station requires; if he detains, or defrauds them of, any part of their *wages*, because they are unable to defend themselves, against the scourge of insolent injustice—In all these cases, it is evident to universal reason, ‘that he can no more from *nature*, and the *positive law* of GOD, than from the institutions of *civil government*, in this happy land of common right, and universal liberty; it is undeniable, that from *neither* of these, he can derive the least *just claim* to the diligence, care, observance, and respectful duty of those, whom he so unworthily abuses.’

THE servant, indeed, may still be inclined, through *fear*, and because he thinks it most *prudent* upon the whole, to suppress his discontent; and, on the other hand the full reward of service, after it becomes remiss and defective, may be continued
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for a while, through the *discretion* and *generosity* of the master. This, on both sides, may be the most fit and adviseable conduct. But neither the *service*, without the stipulated wages, nor the *punctual payment* of the *wages*, without an obedient and submissive carriage, ought to be regarded as a *debt of equity*. Nay, farther, it is in effect an act of *injustice*, for the careless intractable servant to require his full hire; as well as in the fordid avaritious master, to expect offices of exact care and obedience.

THE NEXT branch of indispensable obligation, incumbent on servants, is 'to be *just* and *honest*.' This is one of those eternal ties, that no authority, civil or religious, can *dissolve* or *weaken*, and the wilful breach of which, no temptation can *excuse*. Justice is an universal law, that binds equally, and without distinction, all intelligent beings throughout heaven and earth; and it is owing indiscriminately, and immutably, to all (throughout the whole creation of GOD) who are capable of pleasure and pain — 'to *brutes*; to *slaves*; to *hired servants*; to *equals*; to *masters*; to *magistrates*; to *superior natures*, so far as we are made sensible of their degree, and operations; and to GOD, by the humble acknowledgment, and chearful homage of every rational nature, paid to him, who is the original source both of justice and mercy.'

THIS all-commanding law of justice is, as it were, the main pillar, that bears up the frame of the moral social world; and the chief support both of private property, and publick rights. The great GOD himself is always determined, by the unchangeable wisdom and rectitude of his nature, to be just to all his creatures, to all the subjects of his vast and infinite monarchy: The *prince* is bound to dispense strict and impartial equity,

equity, to the meanest members of his government : The *father* to his children : The *master* to his servants : *Man* to man.

AND shall the *servant*, above all others, claim a *licence* to be *unjust*? ‘ Is it not a perversion of the order of nature, equally *absurd* as wicked, for *inferior characters* to claim a privilege, which the very *highest* ought never to aspire to; *viz.* the *sole exemption* from the common law of all intelligent natures; the *sole liberty* to break through those eternal rules, which are the support of all virtue and order? If we judge from the constitution of nature, and the more depressed rank which they hold in the scale of rational beings,—this common law, and these eternal rules, must, by many circumstances, be rather the more powerfully urged and enforced upon their consciences; since a privilege, which involves in it the idea of distinction and preheminance, seems to be more properly assigned to the *higher*, than to the *lower*, orders.’ And I have made this observation, to impress, upon the minds of servants, a strict and serious regard to every branch of justice; because this conduct, with respect to them, seems something like a *peculiar tie*; or rather, since no difference can be allowed, as to the *general obligation* itself, a *peculiar motive* to the observance of it.

LET me farther add, that injustice to a master has this strong aggravation attending it, that, to the guilt of unrighteousness in general, there is annexed that of the basest and most pernicious kind of iniquity—*fraud*, and *breach of trust*: That the bare *suspicion* of fraud, where it cannot be so circumstantially proved, as to fall under the censure of public justice, may fix an indelible *stain* on the servants *character*, and, consequently, has a natural tendency to reduce him to *straits* and *indigence*: Whereas, an unblemished

unblemished and approved *integrity* will not only render him *belov'd* and *respected*, and procure many *advantages*, to sweeten and relieve his servitude; but may probably raise him, to a *higher* and more *independent* station. So that what I am recommending, is not more plainly his indispensable *duty*, as a *man*, and a *christian*, than it is his interest in the present world; and the only solid ground of his hope of happiness to eternity.

As to the particular branches of justice, required of *servants*, they are chiefly these three; *fidelity*, *frugality*, *diligence* and *industry*. In *fidelity* is necessarily implied 'that they fulfil, to the utmost of their power, *every part* of their *contract*; that they be always careful and studious of their masters *interest*, and transact the business, committed to their charge, with all the *discretion* and *exactness*, which they would think themselves obliged to exercise, or ought in reason to exercise, in the management of their *own affairs*; that they consult the masters advantage in *every article* of *commerce*, with which they are *intrusted*, so far, I mean, as is consistent with the prime and more important law of *equity*, to *all mankind*.' Beyond this they cannot go, without sacrificing justice to *the whole*, to the imaginary rights of an *individual*; and destroying the foundation of all faith, and mutual confidence. If the *master* expects it, he must be a man of no *virtue* nor *honour*; if the *servant* complies with such unreasonable and wicked expectations, he must entirely forfeit his *honesty*. And this he does likewise, in a flagrant manner, if he *defrauds* and *cheats* his master; or *connives* at extravagant profuseness, or clandestine breaches of trust, in other servants. And it concerns both masters, and servants, strictly to examine themselves, and make a close application, of what I have now offered, to their own principles and behaviour; as in

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the presence, and under the intimate inspection, of GOD, with whom *there is no respect of persons* *.

AGAIN, in the general duty of justice, from *servants* towards their masters, *frugality* must, of necessity, be included. And this comprehends in it——‘ that they neither gratify covetous desires, nor indulge luxury and pride, at *his expence*, and to the *diminution* of his *substance*. Upon which account, and that they may have but little temptation to the commission of this crime, let them look upon it, as a part of the duty belonging to their *rank* as servants, to mortify carnal *vanity*, *arrogance*, and *avarice*: Which (till they are raised higher by honest and warrantable methods) are quite *ridiculous* and *stupid* vices in them, as being, not at all, the *natural off-spring* and *product* of their character.’ This article of *frugality* also implies in it, that the *servant* take due care, that every branch of his master’s commerce be carried on with as little *extraordinary charge* as possible; that he embrace every opportunity to *save*, *secure*, and *improve* to the utmost. For, so far as he is *entrusted*, he supplies the *place* of the master himself; and should, therefore, observe the very *same* rules and measures of *frugality*, as reason and prudence prescribe to him.

To fidelity, and frugality——in order to support the character of *servants*, as friends to justice, must be added *diligence* and *industry*——‘ the performing the above-mentioned, and all other necessary offices, not as *men-pleasers*, but in *piety* and *simplicity* of heart †; acting with the same circumspection and care, in the *absence* of their masters, as under their *immediate eye*.’

* Eph. vi. 9. Col. iii. 25.

† Eph. vi. 6.

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And as an encouragement, to their giving this last proof of their *honesty*, let them seriously consider the advantages, of a course of *industry*, to themselves—to their *characters*, and as a *means* of acquiring a *habit* of industry, the natural way, ordained by providence, for rising to *prosperity* and *honour*—and to their *comfort* (especially if they act on principles of religion and virtue) as it will probably supply an uninterrupted fund of *present* satisfaction, and must exalt their prospects, with respect to their *future* being.

I SHALL only add, that another office of *justice*, necessarily belonging to the station of a *servant*, ‘ is a *decent* and *orderly* behaviour ; that the *character* of the master be not dishonoured by his rudeness, indiscretion, and vice, nor his rules of *family-government* disturbed, or violated—and that the divulging *family-secrets*, encouraging children in *stubbornness* and *disobedience*, and endeavouring to *corrupt* their principles, and *instil* into them lewd and vicious dispositions, are flagrant breaches of his *trust*. But I forbear to enlarge farther, because these things cannot but be evident to every common understanding.

AND thus, upon the whole, I have endeavoured to shew, if the servant ought to be *obedient*—what kind of *treatment* of him is best adapted, to secure and enforce obedience ; if *just*—what to teach him the strict rules and measures of justice ; if *frugal*—to inspire good oeconomy ; if *orderly*—to impress a strong sense of decency ; if *industrious*—to encourage diligence. And the whole is founded on this general certain maxim : ‘ That all religious social obligation is a *chain* of duties ; the breaking *one link* of which is, in effect, a *dissolution* of the whole.’

C H A P. VIII.

*Of the institution, and end, of Civil government:
Or, of the duties of Magistrates, and Subjects.*

IN this chapter, my chief aim will be to oppose *tyranny*; and shew the monstrous absurdity of those pernicious maxims of *arbitrary government* which are subversive of all *natural right*.

THE heart of man beats, by nature, most strongly for *liberty*: And this feeling is so *universal, fervent, insuppressible, generous*, and calculated, like the diffusions of God's munificence and bounty, for the *good of the whole*, that it may reasonably be deemed 'a *divine instinct*, and *impulse*, in the human soul.' It is the peculiar *prerogative* of man's *reason*, and the *only soil*, in which it can be ripened and improved. A *constrained* virtue, and religion from *compulsion*, are manifest and flagrant contradictions.

'*Slavery* entirely defaces the image of God, that was, at first, so strongly impressed and stamped on human nature; and renders the condition of mankind infinitely more *ignominious*, and more sensibly *deplorable*, than that of brute creatures: Whose rank of being generally requires, that they should be subject to the absolute *control* of a superior intelligence; and who being
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destined, by the GOD of nature, for *passive* fervitude, have happily *no aspirings* after freedom and independence. So that, upon this plan, the *arbitrary monarch* in the reasonable, and those, who are too *wild* or too *fierce* to be subdued in the animal, world, are the *only subjects* of GOD's universal government, that he ever *intended* should taste the sweets of *liberty*: Or, in other words; the *weaker*, the more *useful*, and *innocent*, are, throughout all nature, utterly deserted by providence, and given up as a *prey* to ravaging and oppressive power.' *Tyrants*, in themselves, the objects of *horror* and *detestation*, beyond pain, poverty, or death; the *enemies* of GOD, who insult, and set at defiance, the model of his supreme government; the *scourges* of nations; the *pests* of all human society; whom *piety*, and *mercy* to mankind in general, oblige us to oppose, and pursue if it be possible, and as far as there is any probability of success, to their absolute *destruction*; these aliens, I say, from humanity are protected from *resentment*: Their violence is declared to be *irresistible*, their sovereign anointed cruelty to be *sacred*.

BUT who could give them an *authority* to be thus oppressive, and insolent? 'Not the *supreme source of power*, without denying himself, and dishonouring his moral perfections: Not the *consent of mankind*, who could never *voluntarily agree* to their own shame, and misery. The powers they claim, therefore, must be all *usurped*: And to say, that they ought not to be *controuled*, though there be a *superior force*, that is able to restrain them within the bounds of honour and justice, is, in effect; to assert, that nature was intended and framed for *mischief*, for *unnecessary* and *wanton* mischief; and all this with no other view; than to pamper the *ostentation* and *luxury* of power, and raise *some*, above their *equals* by nature, to *trample upon* their own kind.' Such a
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constitution as this, one would naturally expect, from a *capricious* or *malevolent* being; but to ascribe it to the GOD of eternal *justice* and *mercy*, is most strangely blasphemous. If *revelation* supported such exorbitant *claims*, which bid utter defiance to *reason*; no pomp of *miracles* could maintain its authority, or screen it from the contempt of the wise, the generous, and the good.

HOWEVER, this is far from being the case: For the principles of the *Christian* religion are equally repugnant to *tyranny* in the governors, and to *sedition* in the subjects. This is the desirable *mean*, to preserve *strict liberty*, without *licentiousness*, and *strict order*, without *incroaching* on nature's rights. But there were *peculiar reasons* for enforcing, in the warmest manner, *submission* and *obedience* to magistrates, at the first promulgation of the *Gospel*.

' TYRANTS indeed (whom GOD's soul abhors) were then in possession of *rule* and *empire*; but the *remonstrances* and *efforts* of a small despised sect, then in its infancy and first growth, could give *no check* to their pride and cruelty, nor, in the least, *shake* their throne. It might, by a precipitate and over-officious zeal, have entirely *crushed* itself; but was unable, with any prospect of *success*, to *vindicate* and *reclaim* the liberties of mankind. Upon these accounts, it was, for *Christians*, wisest and best, and consequently their duty, to submit. The exhortation of St. Paul——for *every soul to be subject to the higher powers* *——might, in that *age*, imply very little more, than the advice, which our *Saviour* gave to the young rich man——to *sell*

* Rom. xiii. 1.

all *that he had, and give to the poor, and to come and follow him* §.
— This last was not, even then, the *universal* duty of *Christians*; nor urged, as far as I can find, upon any but the *Jewish* converts, whose *country*, our Lord foresaw, would shortly be the scene of war, of desolation, and the ruin of all private property; and therefore, wisely directed, the devoting their *substance* to the support of truth and righteousness, rather than that it should fall into the hands of the *Romans*, the common *plunderers* of the world, and minister to their *riot* and *tyranny*. A *community of goods* was, therefore, thought most expedient for *Christians*, in their *present* condition, and with their *uncomfortable* and *gloomy* prospects; as was likewise, upon the same general motives, a *quiet submission* to an unjust usurpation.

BUT is it reasonable, that we, whose *liberties* are established and confirmed, by the *joint consent* of prince and people, should be laid under the same *hard* terms of subjection, as the *slaves* of a lawless and resistless *conqueror*? The cases are so utterly *unlike*, that there is no arguing from the one, to the other. Such submission to arbitrary power, as was *just* and *necessary* in the *first age* of *Christianity*, may *now* be a voluntary betraying our *own rights*, and those of our *posterity*, against all the laws of GOD, and nature.

BUT there were still other reasons, in the days of the *Apostles*, to yield obedience to the persons, who then held the reins of *government*, though by *iniquity* and *usurpation*. ‘For a *new sect* would, naturally, give *umbrage* to a government unsettled, and not founded on principles and maxims of justice. Those,

§ Mat. xix. 21.

therefore, who had embraced it ought, in order to their professing, with more security, a scheme of religion, which they apprehended to be truly divine, to be particularly *circumspect* and *cautious* in all questions and controversies, relating to *civil government*; because by appearing *unseasonably*, as strenuous advocates for *liberty*, they might have given a handle to their enemies to represent *Christianity itself* as a scheme of *sedition*, tending to subvert the constitutions and laws of nations. Besides, as the *primitive Christians* were looked upon, by their *heathen* adversaries, only as a sect of *Jews*, differing in some rites, and circumstances of *superstition*, from the rest of the *Jewish* nation; and as *these*, in general, bore the *character* of a *heady* and *turbulent* people; and, farther, as it was well known, that they expected, near about this very *time*, a *great prince* to arise among *themselves*, who should establish a *new universal monarchy*; nothing could be more *wise*, than the inculcating strict subjection to the *reigning powers*: And that St. *Paul*, in particular, should urge it in his epistle to the *Christians* at *Rome*, who were, for the most part, *Jews*; and St. *Peter*, likewise, upon the *Jewish* strangers, dispersed in other more distant colonies of the vast *Roman* empire.'

UPON the whole, though the *general* principles, and obligations, of virtue are unalterably, and throughout all human nature, the *same*; yet *present duties* may vary, as *circumstances* vary. And therefore, even though we should allow, that the Apostles, above-mentioned, did press *absolute non-resistance* and *passive obedience* (at that time *) to princes invested with au-

* I have inserted this restriction; because, that this was not their sentiment, nor the doctrine of scripture, with respect to *government in general*, and the *rights of subjects*, will, from the whole of this discourse, plainly appear.

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thority ; it can, as was before observed, by no means follow, that the same obligation, to a tame, implicate, slavish submission, lies *equally* on us, who are in a condition quite *different*, and possessed of *legal rights*.

AND to demonstrate this point more clearly, and beyond all reasonable exception, I shall,

FIRST, treat briefly of the *divine institution*, the *original*, and true *end*, of civil government.

SECONDLY, of the extent of authority, in the *ruling powers*, and the just measures of obedience and submission, in the *subjects*.—From whence we shall be easily led to collect, the general substance both of the *magistrates*, and *subjects*, duty.

LET us begin with the *divine institution*, the *original*, and true *end*, of civil government—not of any *particular polity* ; but of *civil government* by the design of nature, and the first intention of GOD, under *all* its various forms.

AND, here, the FIRST enquiry that presents itself is, ‘ how far civil government is an *ordinance* of GOD?’ In answer to which, it may, I think, be safely asserted, ‘ that *no* government deserves to be esteemed, and revered, as *his* institution, but what is framed, and conducted, on the *model* of his own universal government.’ Justice, and mercy, wait on his eternal throne, and, by these, his dominion, and the exercise of his omnipotence, are always *bounded* : And can it be supposed, that he has vested in inferior and dependent powers, his *vice-gerents* and *representatives*, a licence to oppress, and spurn at justice?

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This would be to make himself a *tyrant by proxy*, and to fully all the glories of his most excellent nature: It would be allowing, to *subordinate* governments, *such rights*, as never were, or can be, claimed, under his own *unlimited* and *sovereign* monarchy. Such a complement, therefore, of lawless unaccountable dominion, is an act of idolatry paid to *tyrants*, more gross, and destructive in its consequences, than almost any adorations, that were ever offered, by the *Pagan* world, to brutal or inanimate beings.

AGAIN, SECONDLY, ‘no human government can be directly and immediately *derived* from GOD, which is *absolute* and *uncontrollable*; because *these*, in the nature of things, are the sole *incommunicable* characters of his supreme empire, which has almighty power, and unerring wisdom, to regulate all its administrations, and defend its rights.’ Every earthly government *may be* controuled, and limited; and this appears to be, oftentimes, *expedient* and *necessary*, for the good of mankind in general.

FARTHER, in order to decide the question now before us, let us seriously, and discarding all prejudice, and interested views, ask ourselves these questions——‘Did GOD create the *people* for the avarice, grandeur, and luxury of *princes*; or institute *kings*, and *governours*, for the safety and welfare of the *people*? Could he intend, that the greatest part of the world should be *enslaved*, without remedy, to a *lineal succession* of *tyrants*, perhaps the most *degenerate*, and *worthless*, of their kind? Especially, when it is manifest from experience, that *liberty* is the *parent* of knowledge, of philosophy, of useful arts, of the most sublime and liberal virtues; and *slavery* the *natural source* of im-

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plicity credulity, of baseness of temper, of vice, ignorance, and misery.'

IT is absolutely unreasonable to imagine, that GOD would exalt a few, to be *absolute lords* over the lives and fortunes of others, ' unless they were either of a *different species*, or, at least, endowed with *higher* and more *eminent faculties*. If this was his everlasting standing *ordinance*, he would, without doubt, inspire all such with a *genius*, and *dignity of sentiment*, suited to their rank ; and not have so frequently fixed on those as his *ministers*, who wanted the understanding, experience, and honour, of some of the *meanest* of their subjects.' But nothing can be more unsuitable, to the very idea of his infinite wisdom, than the creating a monster of *tyrannical* power, without making any *provision* for *preventing*, or *correcting*, its extravagancies.

AND to add no more, ' as *empires* and *governments* were *founded*, before we read of any *express law* of GOD, relating to government ; and as the first institution, among the *Jews*, was not of a *regal*, but rather, as it should seem, of a *democritical*, form (the persons, invested with authority, being chosen from among the *elders* of *Israel*) and afterwards, again, the *Hebrew republic* was, by the permission of GOD, converted into a *limited monarchy* : It from hence undeniably follows, that no *particular species* of government can be fixed upon, as the *unalterable appointment* of GOD, contrived and adapted for the *use* of *all nations*—Nor can government *in general* be denominated his *ordinance*, in any other view, than as the *natural instincts*, the *condition*, and *exigencies*, of mankind prompt, and lead them to it. It is the direction and dictate of *nature*, and, therefore, the voice and will of GOD. But this does *not*, in the least, hinder

its being originally founded in the *consent*, and *mutual agreement*, of magistrates and subjects: Because, though *marriage* be an express institution and law of the almighty, it is, however, a *voluntary stipulation*; and the same may be said of the *relations* of masters and servants, in all instances of *contracted* and *limited* servitude.'

BUT all this will not satisfy the unnatural advocates for absolute power, against the common rights of mankind, and their own *birthright*, as the *rational* offspring of heaven. They would, notwithstanding, vain erect a throne of violence and oppression, upon the doctrine of the *new testament*.

'FOR thus they plead, does not St. *Paul* in effect affirm, that *all power is of God*? Must it not be absurd to suppose, that *all power* means no *particular* power, but only rule and government *in general*, that can have no seat but in the *mind*? And is it not a plain presumption, that this Apostle designed to be understood, not of *imaginary* and *chimerical*, but of *real* and *established*, governments, when he adds, *the powers that are* [*i. e.* which actually subsist, and hold the seat of command and empire] *are ordained of God* *?'

THUS it is, that *revelation* is dragged in, to be an *auxiliary* support and prop of *tyranny*, in all its wanton schemes of mischief; so that, whenever the tyrant pleases, there must be an utter dissolution of all the *claims* of *nature*, an utter extinction of all *civil liberty*. But that no such inferences can be fairly drawn, from the passage above referred to, the following con-

* Rom. xiii. 1.

siderations will, I hope, evince, beyond all reasonable exception.

FIRST, 'that it is an *allowed* general rule, in the interpretation of *all* passages of *scripture*, that nothing ought ever to be admitted, as the *true sense*, which is repugnant to our *natural notions* of equity, and to the *moral character* of GOD.' Instituted religion, in all its parts, is to be explained by natural, the eternal, irrepealable, religion of men: And thus we universally restrain and limit, with respect to every passage without distinction, in the right acceptation of which, without any mixture of partiality, prejudice, and private interest, *common sense* and *reason* are alone concerned. *Speak evil of no man**—is never *strictly* and *rigidly* interpreted, because the greater part are inclined to *ensoriousness*; nor, *give to him that asketh of thee* †—because the generality are prone to *selfishness*, and *avarice*. Would *absolute subjection* therefore, and a *tame passive obedience*, be ever represented, as one of the most *meritorious* parts of a *Christian's* duty, if reason, or justice, or consistency of argument, were in the least regarded; and the *flatterer* did not hope to *rise*, together with the *tyrant*, upon the depression and misery of his fellow-creatures? This, most surely, is very *suspicious* reasoning, against which the free and generous part of mankind ought always to arm themselves. And to maintain, animate, and enlarge, their zeal for *liberty*, it should always be remembered, that not the mere *words*, but the certain and probable *sense*, of scripture is their true, and only, *rule* of judgment.

* Tit. iii. 2.

† Mat. v. 42.

To apply this to the passage, now chiefly to be considered, *viz. the powers, that are, are ordained of God.*—The first question, to be asked, is, ‘who was, *then*, the chief reigning power? Nero was the emperor of Rome, to whom, the greater part of the known world was *subject*. What was his *right* to govern? An *hereditary right*, derived from fraud and violence. —Are fraud and violence just *foundations* of *civil authority*? No: But rather horrid and detestable in the sight of God, and man. Had this *tyrant*, then, any *heroical*, or even *good*, qualities, to *soften* the inhumanity and rigour of the subjects oppression? Not one; but was a perfect monster of unbridled *lust*, *rapaciousness*, and *crudelty*.’

COULD GOD therefore, whose throne is eternally fixed and supported by justice, *approve* of one, so utterly corrupt and tyrannous? Could he *immediately depute* him to empire? Could he *constitute*, as his *vice-gerent*, such a flagrant contradiction to himself, his nature, and his laws? Could it be the will of God, that he should not be *opposed*, in any of his schemes of violence, if it could have been done, with a rational probability of *success*? Would it not rather have subserved, the general view of his providence, if he had been *controuled*, nay *dethroned*, and *stripped* of all the prerogatives and *pomp* of *sovereignty*? These things, as they are the certain unquestionable dictates of *reason*, cannot be contradicted by any passages in the *Christian religion*, if it aspires to a *divine* original.

BUT, SECONDLY, ‘it so happens, that the very words of St. Paul himself, taken in their just latitude, and inseparable connection with the context, are as plainly *repugnant* to *tyranny*,
and

and *arbitrary power*, as are the law of man's creation, and the primitive decree and order of nature. For to whom, does he require *subjection*?—To the *minister* of GOD for good; to rulers, that *are not a terror to good works, but to the evil**: This is his own exprefs description of the *powers, ordained of GOD.*

THE instruments, therefore, of plunder and devastation, the infringers of nature's rights, the perverters of justice, the oppressors of the innocent, the underminers of the constitution, the determined opposers of the ultimate end of all sovereign power, can have no pretence, but from mere necessity, to *allegiance* and *submission*. But St Paul on the contrary, even in the above-cited passage, which is alledged as the grand bulwark of tyranny, has laid down, and openly avowed (as far, as the circumstances of the times would *then* allow) the very *principles*, on which the late glorious *revolution* was attempted, and perfected. And tyrants, both upon the principles of nature and religion, can only be the *ordinance* of GOD so far—'as they support peace and order upon *the whole*, and may be, sometimes, preferable to a state of absolute *anarchy* and *confusion*; or, as they are *permitted to reign*, by the supreme authority of heaven, in the natural, and without a *miracle*, unavoidable train of events; or as the *scourges* (like *storms*, and *earthquakes*, and other terrible *catastrophes* in nature) of corrupted and degenerate nations.'

GOD is frequently represented, in the holy scriptures, not only as the *ordainer*, but the *author* of many evils; in which, it is most certain, he can have no *direct* or *real efficiency*. In the strong figurative strain of eastern language, there is no *evil*

* Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

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in a city, which the Lord hath not done * : He *deceives* †, *blinds* ‡, *hardens* || ; things, in the *aēts* themselves, for ever incompatible with his wisdom, purity, and mercy. In the same way, that *these* are described as his *immediate aēts*, tyrannical and oppressive government may be represented as *his institution*.'

‘AND, yet, as blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, are dreadful calamities, which every man, to the utmost of his power, is bound to *prevent* and *oppose* ; so violence and tyranny are, with the utmost efforts of human nature, to be *resisted*, and, if possible, utterly *banished* out of the world. There can be nothing *sacred*, or *invulnerable*, in iniquity and mischief.’ The mere name, the outward dazzling enigmas, of proud imperial tyranny cannot be entitled to a *rational* awe and veneration ; nor can mankind, whom the GOD of nature hath invested with liberty, be required to make a sacrifice of it, to such a mere *idol* of power : Because the *sovereignty*, of GOD himself, is not more properly derived, from his uncontrollable omnipotence, and the extent of his actual dominion, than from the *majesty* of his equity, and goodness.

As to the original, and end, of civil government, after what has been already offered, I need say but little. It is plain, as far as appears both from scripture, and all ancient histories, that it neither *in general*, nor with respect to any *particular form* of it, was derived from an *express institution*, or *positive law*, of almighty GOD. It must, therefore, either have sprang from *conquest*, and *usurpation* ; or from a voluntary solemn *contract*, between the governours, and the people. But as usurpation, and conquest, though they may erect a power, that is arbitrary and

* Amos iii. 6. † Ezek. xiv. 9. ‡ John xii. 4. || Exod. x. 1. 20. Rom. ix. 18.

uncontroulable, can yet confer *no authority*; it necessarily follows, that all *equitable government* must be *founded in mutual consent*.

BUT what, it will be asked, could induce mankind, possessed by nature of *equal liberty*, to *reign* any of their rights, and *submit voluntarily* to a supreme power? The answer is obvious, *viz.* their instincts to *society*, to *regular, peaceable, harmonious society*; and the vast advantages of a *common form of political government*, above the natural state of independence, and private rule. Government is evidently adapted, for the *greater security* of property; for *defence* against injury and violence; for the more *effectual* administration of justice; for cherishing *emulation*, the spur to industry; for *improvements* in knowledge, and the *encouragement* of liberal and useful arts, tending to the refinement, and greater convenience, of human life. And, as the result of the whole, to dignify and enlarge the social character, and advance more completely the social happiness, of man. These were strong *motives*, urging mankind to *unite* themselves together, in particular *civil societies*.'

BUT, upon this foot, the *authority* of the magistrate must, of necessity, be *limited*, and the possessions, and liberties, of the subject *ascertained*. No one, in his senses, could *freely devote* himself to *slavery*, or grant to a superior, of his *own raising*, an *absolute and unlimited* sway. He could neither *alienate* the rights of *conscience*, which *essentially* belong to his rational frame; nor the right of *self-preservation*, which is *antecedent* to all compact, and positive law. But the *regulation* of property, the *methods* of self-defence, and of redressing, and avenging, personal injuries, he must *transfer*, in general, to the supreme constituted power. From whence it must appear, upon the whole, that *magistrates*

are not to be considered as an *order* of men, *distinct* from, but only as *parts* of, the civil community; that they can have no *natural interest* of their own, but what is involved and blended with the *general good*; and that the *ultimate end*, of all government, can be nothing else, than the *prosperity* and *welfare* of the *people*.

BUT there is another enquiry, still behind, the greatest and most momentous of all, and reaching, in its consequences, far beyond the utmost *period* of all civil societies, and the *dissolution* of the world itself, *viz.*—‘What is the just *extent*, and what are the *boundaries*, of the magistrates power, with respect to *religion*, and the rights of *conscience*?’ And here, I believe, it will appear, that he neither has, nor can have, from GOD, from *nature*, from the *people*, or from the peculiar *reason* and *design* of his office, *any authority* at all.

IN all affairs of *justice*, and as to many other branches of *moral conduct*, he has, indeed, an undoubted right to interpose; nay, to enforce *these*, which are likewise eternal laws of heaven, and indispensable parts of true religion, by the *sanctions* of *civil laws*. But why? ‘Not at all, as they are *religious*, but, merely, as they are necessary *social*, virtues; or rather, and to speak more properly, not even as they are *virtues*, religious or social, but as *outward acts*, or *courses* of *public behaviour*, requisite to the order, and regular support, of government. The *exterior*, the *overt-act*, of fidelity and equity will fully answer all *civil* purposes, whether it proceeds from *virtue* in the *heart*, or only from *fear*, and worldly *interest*.’ And *civil authority*, like all other authority, being, of necessity, *bounded* by the ultimate view and end of it; to *stretch* it farther, must be tyrannical
violence

violence and usurpation. 'It may, indeed, *injoin* some things, which *religion* enjoins; but from motives entirely *different*: It may comprehend, within the true scope of it, what *ought*, also, to be matters of *conscience*; and yet have *no right* to interfere, in the least degree, *so far* as they are *really* points of conscience: And, that this is the just state of the case, the following considerations will, I hope, clearly demonstrate.

FIRST, 'that in matters *merely religious*, GOD is, and must be, the sole *legislator*.' No creature can, without great pride and presumption, pretend to fix what are the *general terms* of *acceptance* with him; or so much as to determine any thing, about *public forms* of belief, or worship, without leaving *conscience* absolutely free and uncontrouled. Religion is a *law* to the *heart*; chiefly indeed urged, and enforced, on the internal powers of human nature. But can the *magistrate* take *cognizance* of *inward* principles, or intentions? Can he *reward* inward virtue, or *punish* the inward temper and habit of vice; of both which, it is impossible, that he should be *rightly informed*? 'The power that can neither give *sure infallible* laws, nor secure the *efficacy* and *operation* of its laws, nor in one case, out of ten thousand, *distinguish* between the *guilty* and the *innocent*, can have no pretence to the character of a power, *instituted* and *ordained* by GOD.'

AND this utterly dissipates and destroys all the *claims* of *civil government*, to interfere in the concerns of religion and conscience, either in *essentials*, or *circumstantials*; in the *imposition* of things *necessary*, or *indifferent*. 'For as soon as *scruples* and *doubts* arise, about things *deemed* to be, or which *are really*, in their own nature indifferent; they immediately become matters of *conscience*.'

And therefore, even in such cases, the magistrate's *authority* must be *nothing*, unless it be *unlimited* and *absolute* in all instances: To assert which, would be to abolish *reason*, *conscience*, and *integrity* altogether; and to exclude the *government* of GOD himself.

FOR it is a most certain truth, 'that if the *magistrate* has a *right* to make laws and ordinances respecting religion, GOD can have *no* right: Because, between a power omniscient, and a power limited, weak, and fallible, there can, in innumerable great and important cases, be no *concurrence* or *harmony* of rule.' So that if GOD be rejected, from being the *sole* monarch of the whole *religious* world, the consequence must be no *government*, no *religion*, at all; but the giving up mankind to the loose and arbitrary sway, of error, capriciousness, and violence.

AGAIN, as the magistrate, in the religious world (which is most strictly and unalterably GOD's *kingdom*) has no claim to be a *lawgiver*; as he is entirely unqualified for the *enacting* proper laws, for an impartial *administration* of justice, and effectual *support* of government——this equally evinces, that he has neither from nature, nor the positive will of the supreme being, nor from the consent of the people (the most solemn sacred sources of all government) a right to set himself up 'for an *interpreter* of *divine laws*; or to frame creeds, or articles, to be universally subscribed and assented to, as a standard of *faith*, or as articles of *peace*, or to *qualify* for higher *emoluments* and *honours* in society.'

FOR the law of nature declares, that, with respect to acts of *real virtue*, offices relating to GOD, and transactions for *eternity*,
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the rank of the lowest and meanest subject is upon an exact level, with the pride and ostentation of the greatest princes; that kings are to be judged, not as men have *raised*, but as GOD *created*, them; not by the *accidental privileges* of their high station, but by the *general laws* of human nature, *adapted* to their peculiar circumstances.

BUT, farther, as the eternal law of nature strongly remonstrates, against *civil authority* in matters of *conscience*; both in enacting *new*, and in explaining the *old*, laws of religion; so likewise does *revelation*. For it describes GOD as the *only potentate**, as alone *searching the hearts*, and *trying the reins of the children of men* †, and capable of *rendering*, to every one, according to his deeds ||; as the original source of power, from whom all government is *derived*, and to whom it is *accountable*. And *Christ* himself, the last great restorer, and founder, of true religion, that was to continue unrepealed, and unalterable, to the end of time, has expressly declared, that his *kingdom is not of this world* §: And, consequently, that the doctrines of religion ought not to be established, nor the rules of it enforced, by worldly terrors, and rewards. Besides, if the magistrate be invested with this absolute right of *interpretation*, he must have an *equal*, if not a *superior*, power, to the *maker* of the law: I say, a *superior* power, because the law itself is nothing, but according to his sense and explanation of it; which (unless his skill in moral politics, is equal to that of GOD, the original legislator) will be often, if not generally, a perversion of the law. And this must subject, not only the doctrines of revealed religion, but the eternal principles of reason and nature, to be altered, corrected, or depraved, by ignorance, craft, and ambition.

* 1 Tim. vi. 15.

† Jer. xvii. 10.

|| Rom. ii. 6.

§ John xviii. 36.

BESIDES, ‘ who are more *unqualified*, than the supreme magistrates have been, in almost all countries, and ages, of the world, to give *judgment in religious controversies?*’ Controversies, which, in the general, they never *studied*; of which they are almost entirely *ignorant*; about which, as points of *real religion*, they have very little *concern*, being, for the most part, trained up to voluptuousness, and want of thought: And which, they are under strong temptations to *pervert* (if they did, by a kind of miraculous and supernatural *inspiration*, understand them *rightly*) to vile *secular* purposes?

SUFFER me to pursue the argument a little farther, and to add, ‘ that if *magistrates* have a *right to command*, in affairs relating to religion, *subjects* must be *obliged to obey*, to obey *absolutely*, whether *with*, or *against*, conscience; to obey *all* magistrates, since their right is supposed to result from their *office*; and, consequently to be *Protestants*, and *Papists*, *idolaters*, or worshipers of the one true GOD, *Mahometans*, *Pagans*, *Christians* —all kind of *contrarities*, as they are differently dispersed, and situated. For if they are, any where, allowed to *dissent*, and remonstrate against the *impositions* of the *civil power*, it can only be upon this foundation, that the injunctions, laid on them, are contrary to their *reason*, and the dictates of their *private conscience*: And, if this be *ever* admitted to be a *rightful* plea, it must be admitted in *all* cases; and ‘ *conscience*, not the *will* of the *magistrate*, must be the universal *guide*.’

It is proper to be remarked farther, that there is a manifest and important difference, between *civil*, and *religious*, disputes; ‘ because, in the former instance, it may be impossible for *one*
man,

man, to be absolutely *possessed* of a particular branch of property, without *another's*, being *deprived* of it. But *every man* may enjoy his *religious opinions*, and practice his *peculiar modes* of worship, without the least injury to any other *single member* of the society, or detriment to the whole.'

ADD to all this, that by espousing the sentiment, which I am now opposing, 'of the *necessity*, and *authority*, of a public *magistratical* religion,' *Christianity* itself is virtually condemned; because all those, who at first either *published*, or *embraced*, it, renounced, and directly confronted, the religion of *the state*. Upon the same foot, all *reformations* of the most wicked and hurtful *errors* must, by this new-invented scheme of tyranny, be *precluded*, and *discouraged*. It *cramps* free and ingenuous inquiry, *obstructs* all improvements in moral and divine knowledge, tends to *establish*, and *perpetuate* error, throughout all ages and generations of men, and to *exchange* true religion for *artifice*, and the *uniformity* of an outward, slavish, hypocritical, profession. As the result of all, it must weaken every moral tie, undermine justice, honesty, mutual truth and fidelity, and supplant the foundations of *civil society* itself. - 'And this, I think, is not only applicable to extremes of violence, but to *worldly rewards*, and *discouragements* of all kinds; which are a degree of *force*, upon the *understanding*, and of *tyranny* over the freedom, and immunities; of *conscience*.'

ONCE more, 'if it be *every mans* indispensable *duty*, and, of course, a *right* which he may justly claim, to act agreeably to the inward *light*, and *convictions*, of his own mind, the *civil power* can have no *authority*, to impose the *minute'st* article with respect to *religion*; because these *two rights* are, in their natures, utterly

utterly *repugnant* and *incompatible*.' The allowing the *magistrate's* right is directly calculated, and the experience of the world shews, that it has no other usual effect, than to produce *ignorance, slavery, and misery*. Whereas a *variety* of opinions and sects can, of *itself*, create *no disorders*. These spring, altogether, from the corrupt *passions* of men. And a *public leading* in religion has generally been, in *fact*, the bane of *knowledge*, and *rational piety*; and continues at this day, in almost all nations, to be nothing better, than the establishment of *falsehood* and *iniquity, by a law* *.

IT is, therefore, incumbent, on all *wise* and *Christian* magistrates, whether supreme, or subordinate, to imitate the example of *Gallio*; who was *zealous* to decide *equitably*, in all controversies about *natural* and *civil* rights; but when he was appealed to as *a judge*, in questions and debates merely *religious*, declined thrusting himself into the throne of *God*, and would meddle with *none of these things* §. This is recorded of him, by *St. Paul*, to the honour of his *just* and *generous* temper: The office of a magistrate, so far as it at all concerns *religion*, being wholly confined to this, *viz.*—‘to be strict and circumspect in the regulation of his own conduct, both as a *man*, and a *governour*; to support and encourage the *social virtues*, and punish *impartially*, and without *respect* of *persons*, the contrary mischievous and destructive *vices*, to *protect* every *subject* in the *full enjoyment* of his religious liberty, and *restrain* the *excesses*, and *injuries* of violent zeal, in *all parties*; in a word, to allow to *all*, of equal *public merit*, and who equally *contribute*, their just proportion, to the *support* of government, the *capacity*, at least, of enjoying equal

* Psa. xciv. 20.

§ Acts xviii. 17.

*privileges, and not to debar any from offices of trust, or honourable service to their country, merely for dissenting from the state-religion.—To be, as it were, the guardian-angel of the people, over whom he presides; the asserter of their just rights, the patron and protector of their liberties, against all incroachments; a terror only to evil doers, but for the praise of them that do well**; and *the minister of GOD, for most public and diffusive good* §.'

LET me only add, for the conclusion of this chapter, 'that to all supreme powers, which, in *the main*, pursue the *ultimate end* of government, and consult the *common happiness* of the subjects, reverence and obedience are indispensably due, by all *divine*, as well as human, laws.' It is an act of virtue, and *religion*, notwithstanding many *oversights* and *errors*, to which all *human policies* are liable, to *fear the LORD, and the king* (where a *limited monarchy* is the established form) and *meddle not with them, who are given to change* †; to *lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty* ‖; to *pay tribute, to whom tribute is due* ‡, and *render unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's, and unto GOD, the things which are GOD's* **; and to *support and defend the government, to the utmost of our ability, both against intestine treasons, and the invasion, and usurpation, of a foreign power.*

* Rom. xiii. 3. 1 Pet. ii. 14.

§ Rom. xiii. 4.

† Prov. xxiv. 21.

‖ 1 Tim. ii. 2.

‡ Rom xiii. 7.

** Mat. xxii. 21.

C H A P. IX.

Of the office, and qualifications, of the ministers of the Gospel; and the proper conduct of the people, towards their ministers.

I PROCEED, in this chapter, to discourse on the mutual duties of *Christian ministers*, and *people*, which spring not, indeed, from one of those original and natural relations, which the creator of mankind established from the beginning; but, notwithstanding, from a *relation*, that at present *actually subsists*: The *obligations*, of which, are of the highest importance; and the grosser *neglects*, of them, of as fatal consequence to piety, and social virtue, as those of *any other* relation whatsoever.

THE *Christian* ministry is, *in itself*, adapted, to promote the greatest and most sublime purpose, that *rational* beings can have in their view; *viz.* to advance the inherent dignity and perfection of their nature, and to secure to it the highest happiness, of which it is capable: And yet it has, especially in these modern times, been treated with the utmost *scorn*, and is become, with many, a favourite topic of *reproach* and *ridicule*. This may be owing, in some, to the *corruption* of their own *moral principles*; to a mind immersed in sensuality, and darkened by habits of vice. They may be, perhaps, enemies to the ministerial character,

character, however honourably supported, because they are enemies to all rules of inward order and rectitude, to all restraints upon intemperate passion. And it would be strange indeed, if the *dishonest* should not have a natural aversion to the preachers of strict *virtue* and *integrity*; and the *gay* and *voluptuous*, to such whose office it is, to protest against, and expose, the shamefulness of a life spent in *vanity* and *luxury*, and denounce the judgments of GOD against those *excesses* of animal pleasure, which are not only inconsistent with the *Christian* profession, but dishonourable to the name and character of a *man*.

HOWEVER, there is such an *amiableness* in true *Christianity*; such an evident *fitness* in humble expressions of reverence, and gratitude, to the father and supreme governour of the universe; such native *worth* in probity and justice; such a distinguished *grace* and *beauty* in unconfined benevolence, in gentleness, condescension, and mercy; and the creator himself has graciously provided, so powerful an *advocate* for these necessary virtues, in what is commonly called *natural conscience*, one of the chief principles in our inward *moral frame*; that the abovementioned, even when they are joined by the *giddy* and *unthinking*, whom the charms of a licentious wit, or a fashionable levity, may have seduced: All these, I say, together, would not have made so *formidable* a party, against the credit and influence of the *ministers* of *Christ*, if too many, who have assumed that character, had not furnished *weapons* against their own cause, and increased the *strength* of the enemy, by their imprudent and irregular conduct. ‘ Their insatiate thirst after *riches*, their fierce contentions for *prebeminence* and *greatness*, their unlimited *pride*, and desire of *dominion* over the faith of their fellow-Christians, their *indolence* and *self-gratification*, their expressing a much warmer

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and more intense zeal, for their own peculiar *emoluments* and *powers*, for the *external constitution* of churches, and for human *rites* and *ceremonies*, than for the plain essential *truths* and *precepts* of the *Gospel*; and, in a word, their *animosities* among themselves, their *oppressions* of scrupulous consciences, their *supplanting*, and rigidly *cenfuring*, one another for *involuntary* errors, about points of very remote and inconsiderable use, and their confining *Christianity*, and the *communion* of *saints*, to those of their own sentiments and spirit, and endeavouring to raise, establish, or extend, their *popularity*, by infusing unjust prejudices, against the characters and labours of others: These are *some* of the causes, the libertine conversations, and writings, of the present age demonstrate, that they are among the *chief* causes, of the growth of *infidelity* and *irreligion*.'

It is by means of this palpable, and unnatural, inconsistency of our practices, with those refined *morals*, those maxims of *generosity* and universal *liberty*, which the *Gospel* inculcates, that the ministry is sunk to such a state of irreverence and dishonour, and *Christ*, and his religion, are blasphemed. It is, indeed, a certain sign of a *superficial* judgment, and *narrowness* of thought and observation, to argue against the *intrinsic* excellency, and *beneficial* tendency, of a doctrine, or institution, from mere *accidental* abuses, to which, almost all things in the course of nature, and the principles of every science, are, in some measure, subject. We might indeed, with as much propriety, urge the imprudences, and immoralities, of particular *teachers* of *philosophy*, against the *profession* of philosophy itself, as draw the like preposterous conclusion, from the disorderly conduct of pretended *ministers* of *Christ*. But, notwithstanding, it is greatly to be feared, that some persons of sober dispositions, and, in the main,
of

of upright intentions, have been so far *prejudiced*, as, upon this shallow foundation only, to look upon the ministerial order itself, as at least *useless*, and of *arbitrary* designation, if not as *detrimental* to the cause of virtue, and the interests of human societies.

WHAT now is to be done? The *excesses*, which the adversaries of *Christianity* so much insist upon, which they aggravate, and exert all their skill, and eloquence, to paint in the most disagreeable colours, have doubtless, in too many instances, been grossly *scandalous*: But are they, therefore, to be *concealed*, or *palliated*? This, I think, is by no means adviseable: But it must become us much better, to take all opportunities to *disclaim* such notorious offenders, who are lost to all sense of *decency*. For, by this means, we shall prevent the *infamy* from being general, and take the most effectual course, to repair some part, at least, of the *damage*, which our holy religion has sustained. ‘Especially, if it be added, that the persons, from whom the *offence* and *scandal* have arisen, are such, as *Christ* will at last solemnly *disown*, as having no *commission* under him, nor the least distant *relation* to his service; and that the irregularities, complained of, could never have been committed, if the *ministerial character* had been *rightly* understood, and supported in *that manner*, in which the *New Testament* has described it.’

AND as several passages, relating to this point, have a more confined sense, which can only be justly applied to the *Apostles*, and other *extraordinary* ministers of *Christ*, at the first propagation of the *Gospel*; and all the branches of duty, which belong to *Christian* ministers in general, may be reduced under one part, or other, of the following exhortation of *St. Peter*: I shall fix on that as my standard, and in treating, farther, on this subject,
follow

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follow the order, which is therein prescribed. The exhortation itself is this, *the elders, which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder*—*Feed the flock of GOD, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over GOD's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock* *.

IN these words, there is one general remark of great importance, highly proper to be made, before I proceed to the illustration of particulars: And it is this, *viz.*—That this *prince* of the *Apostles* (as the *Papists*, to give some softening to the insolence and tyranny of the *bishops* of *Rome*, absurdly stile him) assumes no other title than this, writing to the *elders* of the church, *who am also an elder*; or, as the words may be properly rendered, who am your *fellow-elder* †. He claimed no *priority*, no *jurisdiction*, no *peculiar* honours: But, as if he had written under an immediate direction, and influence, of the spirit of *prophecy*, and to prevent his name being abused, as a *sanction* of exorbitant and lordly claims, he represents the character of an *elder* (which is the same, in plain *english*, with *prester*, or *priest*) ‘as a character not of *splendor*, but usefulness; not of *ambition* and *luxury*, but of humility and moderation; not of *sordidness*, but of generosity, and contempt of wordly gain; not of *indolence*, but of activity and labour, for the good of the *Christian* church.’ Nor is this the least diminution of the *honour* of the office, which he describes; because outward *names*, and *titles* of *reverence*, may be annexed to the most worthless and infamous characters: And that, to impartial reason, has always the true *inherent* dignity, which is raised upon, and

* 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 3.

† Συμπρεσβύτερος.

supported by, the strict principles of virtue, and of most extensive and durable advantage to mankind. And upon these general and incontestable maxims of *reason*, and *Christianity*, the ministerial office, when it answers the great design of its institution, cannot be thought unworthy of some degree of affection, and honourable regard: 'Because, upon this supposition of its *success*, it does a service, than which no *higher*, with respect to time, and to eternity, can be rendered, to the *reasonable creatures*, *subjects*, *family*, or, in the Apostles own language, to *the flock of GOD.*' I now proceed to give a more minute, but brief, description of the nature, and design, of the ministerial office, with respect to all the several branches, into which, *St. Peter* has divided it.

AND the FIRST branch of it, which I am led to mention, is this, to *feed the flock of GOD.* Some of the terms, here used, are plainly figurative, but the general sense is——'instruct those, under your care, in the great and momentous *principles* of the *Christian religion*; declare to them the *whole counsel* of *GOD*, relating to their eternal salvation; recommend the *duties*, which the *Gospel* requires, and urge the *practice* of them, by all its most generous, encouraging, and awful *motives*; endeavour to convince their *judgments*, as the only just foundation of engaging their *affections*: And, by these methods, cultivate divine knowledge, improve their inward rectitude, and those habits of piety and universal goodness, which are the *life*, and *strength*, and chief *ornament* of the human soul.'

BUT, besides this general acceptance, there are some more particular directions, that are necessary to be distinctly specified. As,

IN the FIRST place, ‘it is highly necessary, that ministers, as *pastors* of the *flock* of GOD, should acquaint them with the *grounds* and *reasons*, and general *evidences*, of religion, both *natural*, and *revealed*.’ They should begin with explaining, and proving, the fundamental *principles* of natural religion, upon which, not only the *certainty*, but the very *possibility*, of a divine revelation necessarily depends. These important articles are, the being of a GOD, his universal providence, his moral government, and a future state of rewards and punishments. And when the *foundation* is thus rightly laid, the next natural step is, to proceed to the *superstructure*. Whereas, if they are unconcerned and careless, about establishing the *first principles of Christianity*, and all religious knowledge, some, or other, of their hearers, in this age of uncontrouled and wanton scepticism, may be in danger of falling, all at once, from a *profession* of the *Gospel*, into downright *Atheism* itself.

To which I may add, that *rational* belief in GOD, and *just* apprehensions concerning him, must, as the *Gospel* is a *divine* institution, have a direct tendency to strengthen our regard to its *authority*, and inspire a higher veneration of its *laws*, and *doctrines*. And if the people are, likewise, carefully instructed, in the *proper evidence* of *revealed* religion, that they may not be *implicite*, but *reasonable*, believers, upon solid grounds, and a deliberate conviction of the understanding, their *faith* must, in the nature of things, be a more steady and lively principle of universal piety, and virtue.

AGAIN, ‘another rule, necessary to be observed by the ministers of *Christ*, is—when they are explaining the *peculiar* doctrines,

trines, and duties, of *Christianity*, to endeavour to convince their hearers, that they form a *wise* and *consistent* scheme, and have all a *practical* and *purifying* tendency.' They should strongly inculcate the subordination of the *means* of religion to the end, of *speculations*, and *rituals*, to immutable moral duties. For to set faith, and reason, at *variance* is, and must ever be, the root of infinite *superstition*. And if *Christian principles*, and *privileges*, and the positive institutions of *baptism*, and the *lord's-supper*, are any other ways insisted on, than as encouragements and incitements to *virtue*, this is so far from preaching *Christ*, or advancing the ultimate end of his divine mission, that it is really the subversion of it; and making a very bad use of *revealed* religion, to undermine and overturn *all* religion.

THOSE ministers, therefore, do, in my opinion, discharge their office with the greatest *fidelity*, and *care*, whose *principal aim* it is, to enforce the solid and indispensable virtues of a holy life; whose *chain*, and most *frequent scope*, of instruction relates — to the supreme veneration and love of GOD, to equity, truth, universal benevolence and peaceableness, to temperance and chastity, and all other instances of self-government; who inculcate the principles of *Christian liberty*, and acknowledge all, as their *brethren* (however *erroneous*) who lead *godly*, *righteous*, and *sober* lives †; who recommend a diligent *study* of the holy scriptures, and freedom of ingenuous *enquiry* — These ministers, I say, appear, to me, to discharge their office with the strictest fidelity, and care; because they act conformably to the following plain rules, laid down by the *first* preachers of the *Gospel*, viz. — Search the scriptures *: judge ye of yourselves

† Tit. ii. 12.

* Joha. v. 39.

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what is right : *Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing † : This is a faithful saying, and these things, I will, that thou affirm constantly, that they, who have believed in GOD, might be careful to maintain good works : These things are good and profitable unto men ‡.*

SHOULD it be asked, more particularly, in what light, the general scheme of the Christian doctrine may be *most properly* represented ? If I might not be thought guilty of presumption, in undertaking to direct in an affair so much controverted, I would propose this summary account of it.—‘ That the general substance, of this divine institution, is natural religion and virtue revived, when the knowledge of them was, in a manner, erased from the minds of men, by vice and wild enthusiasm ; with the addition of two or three plain positive institutions, guarded in the strongest manner against superstitious abuses, and adapted to enforce the eternal laws of virtue and goodness.’

BUT, more minutely, the principles, recommended by it, are these. ‘ That there is *one GOD, the father §, and the supreme lord of all, who created all things by Jesus Christ ||* : That mankind are *accepted*, with this infinite being, through the *righteousness of faith **, co-inciding, in the final scope of it, with the general law of *sincerity* ; which, at the same time, that it condemns every instance of *wilful vice*, is condescending to the *involuntary infirmities* of human nature : That the favour of GOD is extended to *all* mankind, his forgiving mercy to *all* true penitents ; but dispensed in such a way [*i. e.* through the *mediation*

† 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

‡ Eph. vi. 9.

§ Tit. iii. 8.

* Rom. x. 6.

§ 1 Cor. viii. 6.

of *Christ*] that *reason* could neither *discover*, nor can justly *arraign*—an expedient wisely pitched upon, to encourage *repentance* by the hope of *mercy*; to inspire sinful men, undeserving of the divine favour, with constant sentiments of *humility*; and to extirpate *superstition*: That the father of mankind is ever ready to *assist* them, in the pursuit of purity, and happiness: That he will hereafter *judge the world in righteousness** (whom he has made necessarily subject to his government, and accountable for their behaviour) by *Jesus Christ*: That when he allots, to all *impenitent* offenders, impartial *retribution*, in proportion to the various degrees of their *guilt*, he will munificently *reward* his *faithful* and *obedient* servants (from the immutable *pleasure* he takes in *virtue*, and to render it finally *victorious*, and *triumphant* over iniquity and vice) with immortal felicity and honour: And, that when the fates of all mankind are *judicially* decided, and, consequently, the *ends* of *Christ's* mediation entirely accomplished, *the kingdom* shall be *delivered up* to G O D, *even the father*—that *the son* also *himself* may be *subject unto him*, who *put all things under him*, and G O D may be *all in all* †.

A SCHEME this, upon the whole, that, one would think, every *considerate*, every *religious*, every truly *moral*, man must highly esteem, and venerate: And all, who heartily *believe* it, and allow it to have its natural and just *influence*, will, *probably*, be happy in peace, and sublime joy of mind, here; and, *infallibly*, in the everlasting favour of G O D hereafter.

THE next branch of the ministers duty, which I am led to consider, is—to take the oversight of the flock of G O D. The

* Acts xvii. 31.

† 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

general import, of which, is comprehended in the following particulars.

FIRST, ' that he *examine* into the *condition* and *state* of it, and see (as far as his power and influence, which are *persuasive* only, and not *dictatorial*, justly extend) that all things, relating to the public offices of religion, be managed with *seriousness*, and *decency*; and according to the *model*, and *order*, prescribed in the New Testament.' He ought, also, ' to *watch*, lest dangerous *errors*, subversive of the grand design of *Christianity*, inconsistent with its essential principles, and of an *impure* and *immoral* tendency, are introduced into the church.' And though differences in opinion, about lesser points, deserve but *little regard*; yet when notions, which are directly calculated for the promotion of licentiousness and vice, appear, these are to be strenuously *opposed*. But how? Only by the *force* of argument, and by *mild* and *calm* persuasion: For *the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men* *.

AGAIN, it is his duty, as an *overseer*, ' to instruct the *ignorant*, as their various circumstances may require; to administer comfort to the *dejected*; to raise and support the *feeble-minded*; to endeavour to confirm the *irresolute*; to remove groundless *suspensions* and *doubts*; to check the exorbitant *follies* of *youth*, and give it an *early turn* to virtue and piety; and, particularly, by representing them in the most agreeable and amiable light, and not in a disconsolate and frightful dress, to make them the objects of their *aversion*: And, finally, to admonish and reprove those that *walk disorderly*, and, by their vices, sully the honour of the *Christian* character.'

* 2 Tim. ii. 24.

BUT,

BUT, in order to discharge this *last* part of their duty, with the desired *success*, proper circumstances of *time*, and *place*, and the particular *characters*, and *tempers*, of the persons, to whom *reproofs* are given, must be cautiously considered, and attended to. They must be administered with all the marks of *tenderness*, and *friendship*; and every thing *haughty*, *supercilious*, and *passionate* must be avoided. And there may be some offenders, so entirely lost to ingenuity, and to all sense of the difference of good and evil, that, to *reprove* them, may only be the way, to make ourselves the objects of their *scorn* and *hatred*. Our Saviour, therefore, has *excused*, both the *minister*, and private *christian*, from interposing here, when he says: *Give not that, which is holy, unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you* *:

THUS have I given a short account of the *nature*, and *design*, of the *ministerial office*, and shewn, in a summary way, what is included, in *feeding the flock of GOD*, and *taking the oversight thereof*. We are next to enquire, with what *dispositions*, and in what *manner*, this important trust must be discharged.

AND, here, *St. Peter*, in the passage above-cited, exhorts in the *FIRST* place, that it be *not by constraint, but willingly*; ‘*i. e.* not as a *task*, or *burden*, imposed upon us, nor merely for the *fear* of *punishment*, if we are negligent or unfaithful in it; but from a mind *inclined* to the service, and which has *devoted* itself *voluntarily*, and *freely*, to it.’

* Mat. vii. 6.

SECONDLY,

SECONDLY, *not for filthy lucre*, ‘not from a desire of gain, as the *chief* and *predominant* motive, not from a principle of *avarice*; which is so base and fordid a passion, that it renders a man *unfit* for any considerable and useful *trust*, and incapable of being *honest* and *impartial* in the execution of it; and *indisposes* him, in an especial manner, for a *religious* and *moral* employment, because it is absolutely inconsistent with the love of GOD, and the bane of all virtue——*Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*; *i. e.* a *disinterested* and *generous* temper, that *delights* in doing good, and finds, in itself, a *propensity* and *intense desire*, to promote the honour of GOD, and the salvation of immortal souls.’

NEITHER *as being lords over GOD's heritage, i. e.* ‘not claiming that *jurisdiction* over conscience, that *dominion* over the faith of *Christians*, which the *Apostles* themselves renounced; nor aspiring after *grandeur* and pompous *prebeminence*: *But being ensamples*, to the flock, ‘of *humility*, and *moderation*, thinking themselves happy, in being admitted to *serve* their *Christian* brethren, in so useful a station; and imitating their great Lord and master, who *came not to be ministred unto, but to minister* *.—Being *examples*, likewise, of a fervent, but discreet and temperate, *piety*; of *love* to all mankind; of affability and condescension; of *gravity*, without moroseness; of *mortification*, without superstitious austerities; of *zeal*, without censoriousness, or violent transport; of *openness* and *simplicity* of mind, without prejudice or craft; of *diligence*, *prudence*, *temperate* and *well-ordered* passions; of a strong *thirst* after *knowledge* in themselves, and readiness to *communicate* it, freely, to others; of *contentment*, *cheerfulness*, and

* Mat. xxii. 28.

a calm *submission* to the determinations of providence: And of a *steady*, and though not rash and incautious, yet *inflexible, integrity*; which, though it *shuns* danger, when it may be avoided with *honour*, and a *good conscience*, and is so far indulgent to the peoples *prejudices*, as to take the most *easy* and *inoffensive* methods, of instilling, into their minds, right principles of religion, yet never uses any *arts*, to deceive them into *wrong meanings*; never, by studied *ambiguities* of speech, flatters and confirms them in their *errors*, nor, in the least, fooths their *vices*; and, when called to so *severe* a trial, sacrifices every worldly interest, to maintain the cause of *Christianity* and virtue, which is the cause of *God*.'

I SHALL only add, that *Christian* ministers have the highest possible encouragement, to be thus *incorrupt, zealous, and faithful* in their ministrations, and adorn the religion, which they recommend, by the engaging lustre of a *pious* and *exemplary* life; because, if they so conduct themselves, they are expressly assured, that, *when the chief shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away**.

HAVING thus given a short general account, of the nature and design of the ministerial office, and the obligations resulting from it; I shall add, in the same concise way, the substance of the *duty* of the *Christian people*: A matter of *no less* importance to the honour of *Christianity*, to the advancement of truth and virtue, and to the improvement and flourishing state of *Christian* societies; than the good conduct, prudence, and faithfulness, of ministers themselves. For, in every instance of *relative* duty, where there are *reciprocal* obligations on the parties *related* to

* 1 Pet. v. 4.

each other, be they either magistrates and subjects, parents and children, masters and servants, or ministers and people ; a *failure*, on *either* side, must necessarily create disorders, and be attended with fatal irregularities. This is the direct, and necessary, tendency of the thing, the unalterable constitution of nature ; and in the case, which I am now particularly to consider, it is confirmed, beyond all dispute, by constant observation and experience.

THE *faults* of *Christian ministers*, as I have before observed, have been frequently complained of, and exposed in the blackest colours. But, though the clamour of the *infidel*, and of the profane *libertine*, has commonly rested and centered *here* ; has there been *no other* just cause of complaint ? Has the *irregular* behaviour been *confined* to this quarter *only* ? No man can assert, or honestly venture even to insinuate, this, who knows any thing of the *history* of the church, or of the *present state* of religion amongst us. ‘ On the contrary, it is most notorious, that through the peoples *indifference*, and *lukewarmness*, serious piety, and the practice of morality, have wofully *declined*, under ministers the most compleatly furnished ; of the most amiable and engaging qualifications ; and of exemplary integrity, and diligence. The peoples *pride*, and *ensoriousness*, their bitter *animosities* and *dissentions*, their inflexible *stiffness*, their *narrow sentiments*, and the *discouragement*, they have given, to a free and ingenuous enquiry into the sense of Scripture, have produced the utmost confusion ; and I may, indeed, take upon me to say, that they are among the chief causes of a *weak*, *unimproving*, and *injudicious* ministry ; the reason, why some, of the most *deserving*, have been *obstructed* in their *usefulness*, and a *strong temptation*, with others, to *prevarication*,
and

and *hypocrisy*.' I mention these things, not to cast a reproach upon any *particular* denomination of *Christians* (for *all* are, in some degree, *guilty*) but only to shew, of what vast consequence it is, that the *peoples* duty be rightly understood, and carefully practised.

THE FIRST branch of the *peoples* duty, to their *ministers*, (which I am naturally led to consider, because it is, indeed, the spring and necessary support of all the rest) is 'a *respectful* behaviour, and treating, them at all times, with *due esteem* and *honour*.' But, lest this should be liable to misconstructions, and be thought, to favour somewhat of *arrogance*, when used by one of my character; I beg leave to explain my meaning more particularly, and to be understood, with the following *restrictions*.

I WOULD by no means, then, be thought an *advocate* for *unskilful pretenders*, who are grossly unqualified for the great work of instructing others; nor for the *lazy*, and *vicious*, who are a scandal to their profession; nor for *proud imposers*, who endeavour to enslave the consciences of mankind; but only for persons of *real merit*; of *ability*, *zeal*, and *faithfulness* in their work, and who, instead of *lording it over God's heritage*, are *ensamples to the flock* *. Nor is the *respect*, which I plead for, 'an *absolute submission* to the sentiments of any ministers, however worthily esteemed, for their learning, and piety.'

FOR if *Christians* blindly follow their spiritual guides, and swallow all their doctrines implicitly, I am sensible, that they

* 1 Pet. v. 3.

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lie open to endless *impositions*, and can have no guard, against the most stupid *enthusiasm*, nor even against *irreligion* itself. On the contrary, the more *freely* their opinions are examined, by the universal rule of *right reason*, and the primitive standard of *revealed religion*, those, under their care, are more likely to improve in *Christian* and divine knowledge, and to be engaged, and fixed, in the universal practice of *virtue*.

I WOULD therefore, instead of discouraging, earnestly recommend, an *impartial study* of the *holy scriptures*, as the *natural way*, for men to form a *consistent*, and *rational*, scheme of belief and practice; *just* notions of GOD; and of the extent of *religious* and *moral* obligations. By this means, the *Christian people* will have a *straight* and *easy* rule to go by, and build their hopes of happiness on a *solid* foundation; whereas, the *neglect* of it has introduced incomprehensible articles of *faith*; doctrines prejudicial to *true goodness*; gloomy, distrustful, sentiments of the DEITY; and superstitious distracting *terrors*.

AGAIN, reading the *scriptures*, with impartiality, will inspire sincere and honest minds with *humility*, and *benevolence*, with *moderation*, and *forbearance* and mutual *candour*: But, the neglect of it multiplies blind and violent *disputes*, and propagates a wild furious *zeal*, without knowledge, or discretion.

AND to mention, at present but one advantage more of what I am now recommending—By this means, common *Christians* will better *understand* the *grounds* of their faith, and, consequently, be more firmly *established* in it. They will be more fully acquainted, with the *intrinsic excellence* of the doctrine

trine of *Christianity*, and the strength and weight of its *external proofs*: And so will be believers, not upon the foot of mere *tradition*, and *authority* (which confirm *all* religions equally) but upon rational, *conviction*, and *choice*.—From all which premises, it is natural both for ministers and people, to infer, that, to *search the scriptures* * is the *universal duty* of *Christians*; and their being at liberty to do this, unmolested, and unterrified, by an *anti-christian* oppression, I sincerely think (and would to GOD, that they all regarded it in the same light) is the *biggest*, and most *valuable*, of their outward *Christian* privileges.

‘ AND, now, is there any thing like *lordliness*, any thing like *spiritual tyranny*, in all this? Any thing, but what tends to *openness* and *enlargement* of mind? It must, upon these principles, be entirely the people’s *own fault*, if they are *ignorant*, *enslaved*, *bigotted*: And they should complain less of *priestly craft*, and much more, than they are apt to do, of *self-deceit*, and *self-imposition*.’ For when they are, at any time, exhorted to *obey*, and to *submit themselves* †, this is only so far, as they are obliged to *submit* to *any other* wise, and rational, institution: It is not to such *rulers* [or guides] as are allowed to exercise a *dominion* over their *faith*; but to such, as are *only* appointed to be their *instructors* in true *Christianity*, and the *helpers* of their purity, and joy.

FINALLY, ‘ the *respect*, that is due to *ministers*, is not claimed on account of any singular *merit* in them; and much less, on account of mere *titles*, and outward *distinctions*; or of any indelible *authority*, or inherent *sanctity*, inseparable from the office itself; but for the *usefulness* of the ministerial character, when

* John v. 39.

† Heb. xii. 7, 17.

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rightly and honourably supported.' Accordingly, we find, that St. Paul exhorted the *Theſſalonians*, to *know them who laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, and admoniſhed them; and to eſteem them very highly, in love, for their works ſake* * : Which, ſurely, is ſo far from being an *exorbitant* and *ambitious* claim, that it is rather enforced, by all principles of reaſon, and generoſity.

BESIDES, as it is impoſſible, that the *weight*, and *credit* of any conſiderable character ſhould be maintained, if thoſe, who are inveſted with it, are *ſlighted*, and *viliſied*, it from hence neceſſarily follows, ' that the diſreſpect, ſhewn to the *faithful miniſters* of *Chriſt*, is not likely to terminate in their *perſons*, but tends to bring the *office* itſelf into contempt. And a *deſpiſed* miniſtry has always been, and ever will be, in proportion, an *unſucceſſful* one.' Let the people, therefore, take heed, that neither a blind zeal, nor haughtineſs, nor paſſion, nor a petulant captious temper, be ever ſuffered to hurry matters on to this *extreme*, to the diſcredit of *Chriſtianity*, and the obſtructing its *progrels*.

' ANOTHER part of the duty of *Chriſtian* people towards their miniſters, is, to allow them a *proper ſupport*.' I need not inſiſt long on this, becauſe every man's own reaſon, if he allows himſelf to think at all about it, muſt convince him, that it is a branch of natural *equity*—That they, who *entirely devote* their *labours* to promote the knowledge, and practice, of *Chriſtianity*, and conſequently, the higheſt happineſs of mankind, and deprive themſelves oftentimes, upon that account, of very conſiderable *worldly advantages*, which they might *otherwiſe* obtain, ſhould

* 1 Theſ. v. 12, 13.

receive a *subsistence* from those, to whom they minister; and, I may add, a *comfortable*, and *honourable*, subsistence, in proportion to the importance and usefulness of the *service*, in which they are engaged

AND this *claim*, so agreeable to all principles of *natural justice*, the *Gospel* has *confirmed* in such strong terms, as will admit of no evasion. Thus, St. Paul enjoins, that *he, who is taught in the word*, should *communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things* *. And, in his first epistle to the *Corinthians*, there is a very singular and remarkable passage, to the same purpose. *Have we not power* (says he) *to eat, and to drink? Have we not power* (or a right) *to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles? — Who goeth a warfare any time, at his own charges? Or, who planteth a vine-yard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things, as a man? Or, saith not the law the same also? For it is written, in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox, that treadeth out the corn. Doth GOD take care for oxen? Or, saith he it, altogether, for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: That he, that plougheth, should plough in hope; and that he, that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you, spiritual things, is it a great thing, if we shall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know, that they, who minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? And they, who wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so, hath the Lord ordained, that they, who preach the Gospel, should* (though, without having specified any *particular way*, in which their *maintainance* is to be raised) *live of the Gospel* †. Persons, who have renounced *Christianity*, or, who profess *no religion* at

* Gal. vi. 6.

† 1 Cor. ix. 4—14.

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all, may think all this to be idle and chimerical talk ; but certain I am, that no *Christian* can help being convinced, that this is a *standing*, and *indispensable*, branch of his *Christian* duty.

WE may add to all this, that scarce any thing contributes, so visibly to the honour, and usefulness, of the ministry, as the raising the *condition* of those, who are engaged in it, above the *anxious cares* of *indigence* and *poverty*. *Easy* circumstances, in life, create *cheerful active* spirits, *animate*, and *enlarge*, the mind, and inspire a becoming *confidence*, and *resolution*. Whereas, when a man is oppressed by *want*, his *faculties* are cramped, and cannot dilate, and exert themselves to advantage : He abates of his *vigour* ; and his best instructions lose a great deal of their *weight*, and are treated, especially by proud and haughty spirits, with *insolence*, and *scorn*—An event this, that all, who wish well to the cause of *Christianity*, and are desirous, that the obligations of *virtue* be supported with *public energy*, and *reputation*, must, one would think, be solicitous, to the utmost of their power, to prevent.

SUFFER me, however, just to add farther, that what I have now urged, notwithstanding its importance, seems to be a point, that many *Christian* societies have been but *little sensible* of : Who, instead of affording their ministers a *generous support* (though a right of nature, and a right, which the *Gospel* has, in the most diffuse and ample terms, established) act, as if they would *force* them, to the practice of *self-denial*, and deprive them of the *virtue*, and *reward*, of *approved* and *voluntary* self-denial ; and who maintain such a prodigious disproportion, between their care, and expence, for *time*, and *eternity*, as if the present *animal Life* was the completion of their warmest desires,

desires, and the *health* and *immortality*, of their souls, but an inconsiderable ingredient in their happiness.

BUT as this is a nice and tender topic, and my enlarging farther upon it may, in the opinion of some, look too much like *self-interest*, I shall drop several other particulars, that might be mentioned: And for what has been already said in general, the *necessities* of many worthy families, the plain *equity* of the case, and its being expressly inculcated in the *Christian* revelation, will, I hope, be deemed a sufficient apology. For myself, to obviate any *personal* reflections, I declare, that I have as much as I *desire*, and more perhaps, than I could, in *modesty*, claim.

IN the THIRD place, it is the duty of the *Christian people* (to make use of an expression of *scripture*, which might, *otherwise*, be ridiculed by the light wits of the present age, even though they have not yet proceeded so far, as *openly* to *disclaim* all belief of *Christianity*) ‘it is, I say, the duty of the Christian people, to attend on the *ministration of the word*—as well as on the other public services of religion: For, without this, the office of a minister must be absolutely *impertinent*, and *useless*; and it would be much more consistent, to *declare against* it altogether, and *dissolve* all religious societies.

THE advantages of *public instruction*, and *social worship* are very evident. They keep alive, a general sense of a DEITY, and a *providence*, and of the great *obligations* of religion. And were it not for these *stated solemn* exercises (notwithstanding accidental *abuses*) it may be justly questioned, whether great numbers, even in *Christian* countries, would not be quite over-run with sottish *ignorance*, and *barbarism*. To neglect, therefore,
public

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public worship altogether, must be of very ill consequence to the cause of *Christianity*, and *common morality*. The *wisest*, and *best*, will find their good dispositions *improved* by it. Or if it was true, that they could expect no farther *proficiency* (as *arrogance* and *self-conceit* may, perhaps, dictate; but which, I believe, no truly *modest* man will be forward to believe of himself) yet their *example* may be of great use, to quicken the *zeal* of *others*; and, on the contrary, their *totally absenting* themselves may *influence* many, who really want *instruction*, to do the like, and, in the end, beget in them an *indifference* about all religion.

BUT, with respect to *Christians*, the obligation is still more clear, and incontestable. For, of the *believers*, even in the *apostolic* times, this express account is given, that they *all continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication* *; that they *were all, with one accord, in one place* †; and that they *continued, stedfastly, in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers* ‡.

AND, that in these religious assemblies, there were *sermons*, and *exhortations*, to the people, as well as *prayers*, and *thanksgivings*, offered to almighty GOD, is undeniable from the following passages: In which, it is asserted—of *Saul*, and *Barnabas*, that, *when they assembled themselves with the church at Antioch* (where the *disciples were first called Christians*) *they taught much people* ||; that, *upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them* §. —And he gives this account of *himself*, to the *elders of the*

* Acts i. 14.

|| Acts xi. 26.

† Acts ii. 1.

§ Acts xx. 7.

‡ Ver. 42.

church

church of *Ephesus*, that he kept back, from them, nothing that was profitable unto them; but had taught them publicly, as well as from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*. The same thing is said of the *Apostles* in general, viz. that, they ceased not to teach, and preach Jesus Christ †. And, therefore, the author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* has thought it worthy, to be the matter of a direct *Apostolical* injunction, to consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some was ‡, even in those primitive times of *Christianity*. I may add to this, ‘ that it is proper, at least in general, that the *Christian* people should attend the public offices of religion, in that *Christian* society, to which they more immediately belong, and for this plain and obvious reason; that, without this, it is scarce possible that particular churches should subsist, nor, consequently, that public worship itself should be regularly maintained.’

I SHALL recommend one thing more, before I conclude this head, which is, that, in hearing the word preached, the hearers ought to take care, not to be influenced by vain curiosity; for then it will only yield a present trifling, and useless, amusement: Nor should they chiefly regard the elegance of a discourse, and the gracefulness of the preacher’s delivery; which, of itself, can only strike the fancy, but neither rectify the judgment, nor improve the moral character: Much less, ought they to attend on the public exercises of religion, to indulge a captious cavilling humour, to spy out, and censure, faults, and criticize on the little slips, and inaccuracies, of the preacher; because this

* Acts xx. 20, 21.

† Chap. v. 42.

‡ Heb. x. 24, 25.

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will feed *pride, self-conceit*, and foment a spirit of *contention*. But we should be principally careful to divest ourselves of all *prejudice*, which renders the mind *unimpressible*, by the strongest light, and evidence, of truth; which aggravates every *minute human frailty*, into a *fundamental error*; which no *eloquence* can move, no *force of reason* conquer.

FARTHER, 'it is an indispensable part of the *people's* duty, to allow their ministers to declare, with *freedom, the whole counsel of GOD**; *i. e.* every thing, which they *think* to be an important *truth, or duty*, of the *Gospel*, how much soever it may *differ*, from *received and established* sentiments and forms.' Let there be no *restraint, or terror*; but the utmost *encouragement* given, to a free, and impartial, study of the holy Scriptures; since it is in this way alone, that a minister can *form* just notions of *Christianity* himself, or be qualified for *explaining* it to others. And private *Christians* can receive no *advantage* at all, from their ministers *studies*, if they confine him to certain favourite points, as a sacred *standard* of truth, which they are determined never to *recede* from.

CHRISTIANITY is a thing, no more to be learned *all at once* by the *minister*, than by the *private members* of the congregation. Let him be allowed, therefore, to give himself all the *scope*, that reason, and conscience, and an ardent thirst after knowledge, *require*; and the weakness, and inability of human nature, to comprehend *all truth*, will for ever *demand*. If, indeed, he is *infallible*, which we all know that *he* is not, as well as that *we ourselves* are not, we are then *secure*; otherwise, it is absolutely

* Acts xx. 27.

impossible, that either party should make any *proficiency*. Upon this absurd supposition, we are *entrenched* in ignorance, within a *line*, that neither *reason*, nor *revelation*, can force.

BUT, above all, I would advise private *Christians*, not to be so *arrogant*, and *presumptuous*, as to be forward, upon every occasion, to sound the alarm of *heresy*; which, in every age of the church, has been an engine of *scandal*, and *violence*, and the cause of endless *schisms* and *confusions*. For how unjustifiable must it be, to impute this heinous crime to men of *honest* principles, and *exemplary* lives, who are quite the *reverse* of the *heretics*, mentioned in the New Testament; and who, if *St. Paul's* authority be of any weight (who describes them as persons *self-condemned*, and acted by *ambitious*, *factious*, *selfish* views) cannot possibly have incurred that *guilt*.

AGAIN, 'another branch of the *peoples* duty is, to put the most *candid* constructions on their ministers *publick discourses*, and on every part of their *behaviour*.' Interpret nothing *rigorously*, that is capable of a more *favourable* sense. *Pass* by little *indiscretions*; *conceal*, instead of *exposing*, the common *frailties* of human nature, that are consistent with general *integrity*. Expect nothing from them, beyond what the laws of *reason*, and *religion*, demand; nor form *different rules* for their conduct, with respect to the common incidents and concerns of life, from what other men are subject to.

IF it should be said, that they are to be *examples* to the rest of the world: I answer, *of what?* Of every thing truly *virtuous*, *praise-worthy*, and *upright*, it is allowed they should be—But not of *enthusiasm* and *superstition*; not of a *sour*, *morose* and *formal*,
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behaviour; not of *spleen* and *melancholy*, and of *proud*, or *sullen*, *retirement* from the world; not of casting a *reproach* on the wisdom and goodness of providence, by refusing to enjoy those *common conveniencies*, and *accommodations*, which GOD has graciously provided, for the *delight* of human life—For these things are so far from being *parts* of true religion, that they are, rather, the direct *reverse* of it; that consisting, in a great measure, in the exercise of the *social virtues*; and *her ways* (being represented) as *ways of pleasantness*, and *all her paths peace* *.

LET me add to this, ‘that if you have conceived any *prejudice* against your minister, you ought to take the first opportunity, by a free *conversation* with him on the particular subject that gave *offence*, to get that prejudice *removed*; and not suffer it to *fix* and *grow* in the mind, till, at length, it becomes so *deeply settled*, as never to be *rooted out*. Perhaps, the matter may be *explained* to entire *satisfaction*; or, at least, the *malignity* of it may be greatly *mitigated*: But, however that be, it is very great *injustice* to a minister’s character, not to put it in his *power* to *clear* himself; or, to entertain *prejudices* against him, without being sure, whether they are *well grounded*, or *not*. And if the *same method* was followed by men, *universally*, with respect to each other; considering the *suspicious* temper of the world, how liable they are to *mistake*, and how prone to *misrepresent*, universal discord, and mischief, would be unavoidable.

THE last advice that I shall give (which may be thought perhaps to be more of a prudential, than of a strictly religious, nature) is, ‘that the *people* engage their minister, as little as possi-

* Prov. iii. 17.

ble, in private *quarrels*, and *disputes*, either as a *principal*, an *evidence*, or a *judge*; lest they prejudice him in the *esteem*, of one or other of the *contending* parties, and, thereby, lessen his *usefulness*, upon the whole.' They should chuse, rather, to *refer* the matter to some more *private friends*; who may, perhaps, have equal *abilities* to decide, in *nice* and *critical* cases of this kind, and with less danger of giving *offence*. But if any thing of this nature must come under the *cognizance* of the minister, it is but common justice, that he be left to determine, with perfect *freedom*, as the *equity* of the case appears to lie; and that none be *displeas'd* with him, for making, what he *thinks*, a *right* decision.

I MENTION this *particularly*, because it has, to my own knowledge, occasioned irreconcilable *differences*; and indeed is, in itself, a very *probable*, and *fruitful*, source of *discord*. But, if the minister happens to be *abus'd*, and *persecuted*, on this, or any other, account, it is the *peoples* duty to *defend* him, and *vindicate* his personal honour, and integrity: It is most *ungenerous*, and *base*, to *desert* him in such an extremity (when he suffers, for an inflexible adherence to the cause of *honesty*, and *truth*) whatever be the *character* and *power* of his oppressor. And such a *mean treacherous* condescension in those, who, he had reason to expect, would be his *friends*, and support his *innocence*, may not only put him out of a capacity of *present* service, but unqualify him, in a great measure, for *future* usefulness.

THUS have I finished my discourses, on what are peculiarly filed relative duties: In the chapters that still remain, the subjects will be, as follow, *viz.*

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A GENERAL, *summary*, account of *Justice* : And the *Christian rule*, of *Equity*, particularly explained.

OF *Self-love*, and its *Excesses* : Or *Selfishness*, and *Benevolence*, compared.

OF *particular branches of universal Benevolence*—And FIRST, of *Mercy*, in its several parts.

OF *private Friendship* ; and *the Love of our Country*.

OF *Unity* ; and *Peaceableness*.

OF *Humility* ; and *Meekness*.

C H A P. X.

A general, summary, account of Justice: And, the Christian rule, of Equity, particularly explained.

THE whole of *Justice* in general will, I believe, be comprehended under the following heads; to which, all the different *branches*, and *offices*, of it may easily be reduced — ‘ An exact and scrupulous regard to the *rights* of others, with a deliberate purpose, to preserve them, upon all occasions, *sacred and inviolate*; and, from this *fair and equitable temper*, performing every necessary *act* of justice, that relates to their *persons*, or *properties*: Being *just* to their *merit*, and *just* to their very *infirmities*, by making all the *allowances* in their favour, which their *circumstances* require, and a good natured and equitable *construction*, of *particular cases*, will admit of: Being *true* to our *friendships*, to our *promises*, and *contracts*: Being *just* in our *traffic*, *just* in our *demands*, and *just*, by observing a due *moderation* and *proportion*, even in our *resentments*.’ The *distinct offices* of justice are, indeed, somewhat various, as men’s *conditions* and *characters* differ; but the general *obligation*, and the general *rules*, are one and the same.

LET me just add here, that the virtue of *justice* is not only the main *pillar*, and *strength* of societies; but, as it were,

were, the *essential* and *vital spirit*, by which they *subsist* : And, that the contrary vices, of *'dissimulation, deceitful compliment, lying, fraud, treachery ; of censoriousness, detraction, slander, undermining arts, rigorous oppression, and injury of every kind ;* are directly calculated to *dissolve* the *frame* of all governments, to render a *regular social life* absolutely impossible, and *human life* itself unsupportable.

BUT, we shall have a *clearer idea* of this virtue, if we consider distinctly the *Christian rule* of equity ; and the occasion, on which it was introduced by our Saviour, as an inviolable part of the *moral law*, in his sermon on the mount.

IN this discourse, we have the largest *scheme* of morality, in *one view*, that is to be found in the whole New Testament. The particular design of it was, to *restore* the law of nature to its original *purity*, in those instances, in which it had been either *partially* stated, or grossly *corrupted*, by the glosses and comments of the *Jewish* doctors ; and, by a multitude of *vain traditions*, imposed upon the people as *sacred*, which, in a great measure, *vacated* the *obligation* of it. We are not, therefore, to expect, in this discourse, a *complete abstract* of *Christian* morals, in a *regular connected* system ; because it was chiefly intended to rectify *abuses*, and remove blind *prejudices*, which *enslaved* men's minds, and *perverted* their notions of good and evil : It is natural however to observe, that the *virtues*, therein recommended, are rationally *explained*, reduced to their right *principles*, urged in their proper *extent*, and enforced by the most powerful, sublime, and generous *motives* ; and that the strictest care is taken, to inculcate the necessity of good *inward dispositions*, and regular *passions* ; and make us, principally, to regard that *integrity*,
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and *rectitude of heart*, in which the perfection of human nature consists.

THE *Jews*, it must be owned, had very *strong* and *exalted* sentiments of virtue, communicated to them in the writings of the *Old Testament*; and, especially, by the *prophets*; who were sent, when they were most *degenerate*, most extravagantly zealous for *ceremonies*, but loose and dissolute in their *morals*, to bring them back to the practice of the eternal rules of *truth*, and *righteousness*. But, notwithstanding this, at the time of *Christ's* coming, their *piety* was little more than *formality* and *superstition*; and yet, upon *this* they highly *valued* themselves, and made a public *ostentation* of what was dishonourable to *GOD*, and a reproach to *human reason*: They had learned, it seems, in *those days*, to separate *religion* from *morality*. It was, therefore, of the utmost importance, that our blessed Saviour should, particularly, *enforce* the laws of *justice* and *charity*; and represent them as *essential* points, in the religion of *Moses*, and the *prophets*; making them, at the same time, *indispensable* branches of his *own scheme* of *religion*: For, by this means, none can hope to atone, for *defects* in the *social virtues*, by *ceremoniousness*, and the warmest raptures of *enthusiasm*,—without opposing, at once, the light of *nature*, and the principles and dictates of *revelation*

THIS is expressly asserted, with respect to the great law of *justice*, viz. *All things, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them* *. And the great *usefulness*, of this general *maxim*, appears from hence, 'that it is a com-

* Mat. vii. 12.

pendium of equity, an abridgement of all the rules of it, in a narrow compass, easily understood and remembered ; and, at the same time, an intelligible and plain direction to us, in every part of our conduct, which concerns the interests and rights of our fellow-creatures.' This shall, hereafter, be more particularly considered : But, in the mean time, it is highly proper, that we premise some observations, for the explanation of the rule itself. And,

FIRST, in order to the right interpretation of it, 'we must make all due allowances for the different stations, circumstances, and characters of men.' It has been necessary for me, to remark often in these discourses, that the wisdom of providence has made a great distinction between mankind, with respect to natural abilities, and outward advantages ; and that, from hence, arise various degrees in human life, in a natural subordination to each other. Now this variety of conditions, must render different measures of conduct, not only becoming, but necessary ; not only suitable to the respective characters, to preserve order, propriety, and decency, but absolutely requisite to the well-being and strength of societies : And, on the contrary, the bringing all ranks of men upon a level by insisting on the same uniform behaviour in all, would make the world one wild, and endless, scene of extravagance and confusion.

THE rule of justice therefore, prescribed by *Christ*, must not be interpreted so loosely, and in such an indeterminate manner as this, 'but as a rule of proportion, which supposes some equality in the circumstances ; or, in other words, obliges us to do that for others, and that only, which, in the same state or relation, we desire that they should do for us.' Thus, for example, and

to put an instance which is absolutely unexceptionable—A *prince* may justly demand *respect* and *obedience* from his *subjects*, but he is not bound for that reason, to treat *them* with the *like* marks of deference and submission; but only, to *rule* with that *gentleness* and *clemency*, that tender regard to the *public welfare*, that watchful and affectionate care of his peoples *liberties*, and of the *rights* of each particular member of the community, as he *himself*, were he in the rank of a *subject*, would expect from a *wise* and *equitable* governour. The same reasoning will easily be carried, through all the *other* relations of life; some of which are necessarily *inferior* to, and *dependent* upon, others: And, to extend the rule *farther*, is confounding the *nature* of things; and attempting to establish a *pretended* scheme of *equity*, by the destruction of *truth*, and *reason*.

AGAIN, supposing the *circumstances* of the persons to be the *same*, which is evidently necessary, in order to make this general *rule* agreeable to the natural principles of *Justice*; we must interpret it with this farther *limitation*, *viz.* ‘that we are *not bound*, in all respects, to do *that* to *others*, that we may *wish* and *desire* they would do for *us*; but only *such things*, as are, at least, *innocent*, and consistent with *virtue* and *religion*.’ For this is recommended to us as a rule of *reason*, of *universal* and *eternal* obligation; and is not, therefore, to be framed by *selfishness*, *fancy*, *prejudice*, or any other *principles*, that are so *irregular* and *variable*. To assert, that *one man* ought to behave *unreasonably* towards *another*, only because he would foolishly have *that other* to behave in such a *manner* towards *him*—is making *falsehood* and *error* the foundation and test of *right conduct*: It is setting up an *imaginary rule* of equity, against the essential and indispensable laws of equity: It represents *social virtue* as

entirely *arbitrary*, and the *difference* of good and evil as *uncertain*, and *indeterminable*: And, consequently, not only contradicts the design of *Christianity*, but subverts *natural religion* itself.

I AM aware, that it may be objected here, ‘that though *right reason* be the *ultimate rule* of our conduct, yet every man’s *judgment*, and *sense* of things, is, to him, the *immediate rule*: That *reason*, with respect to *particular persons*, is *their own* reason, and the *fitness* of *action* can, to them, be no *other*, but what they apprehend to be fit: So that it is needless, it may be said, to put in this *restriction*, that we are *only* bound to do to *others*, what we may *innocently*, and consistently with the principles of *virtue*, *desire* they should do to *us*: Because if we *think* it *innocent*, or *insist* upon it as a matter of *right*, our *obligation* is exactly the same, as it would *have been*, if the thing was in *reality*, as it is in *our notion* of it. Our Saviour’s words, therefore, must be taken *strictly* and *literally*, *thus far* at least, that we should treat our *fellow-creatures* in the *same manner*, not only as we *may*, but as we *think we may*, reasonably expect they should treat *us*, in *like circumstances*.’

To this I answer, ‘that what is our *duty*, by this *rule* of *justice*, is a consideration entirely *distinct*, from what we are *obliged* to, in order to demonstrate our *integrity*, in pursuing the *dictates* of our understanding, and conscience.’ A man, of an *erroneous* conscience, forfeits the character of an *honest* man, if he does not *follow* the *guidance* of it; but if he *does*, he may, notwithstanding, be *wrong* in his conduct. Thus, for instance, if any one thinks it his *duty* to *persecute* his neighbour, for not being of the same *faith* with himself; notwithstanding the plea
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of conscience, he violates, in a most glaring and shameful manner, the immutable laws of righteousness and charity.

To apply this to the present argument; it will undoubtedly be allowed, with respect to this rule of equity, that every man ought to act, agreeably to his own sentiments of the true meaning, and extent of it: But it cannot, from hence, be inferred, 'that it is, really, no more in itself, than what each particular person apprehends it to be, and, consequently, mere opinion and fancy;' because, to suppose this must be, in effect, to assert, that truth and falsehood are, equally, the standard of right and wrong. Nay, as it is natural to presume, that opinions will widely differ, the sense of this rule must be infinitely various, and inconsistent with itself; but, in truth, if there be any thing of instruction or use in it, the meaning of it must be something certain, and determinate, and its nature, and rational design, must remain exactly the same, however mankind may differ, in their explication of it. If it should be enquired, after all, what is the rule of reason in the present case, I have already stated it thus: 'That we are bound to do for others, in the same station, and relations, of life, only those things, which we may innocently, and consistently with the general duties of religion, desire they should do for us.'

BUT, in all instances of generosity, if we expect, that our fellow-creatures should exceed, what they are strictly obliged to, by the rules of justice and common benevolence, it must be right for us (provided we dispose only of our own property, and are injurious to none, who have an equitable claim to our assistance, and support) to be generous in the same measure, and degree. And the
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inconveniencies, we may suffer, by being thus *high* in our expectations, by carrying our notion of generosity *too far*, and thinking it our *duty* to *practice* accordingly, will, very probably, have this effect upon us ; to put us on *re-examining* the rule of *right*, and, by this means, to enable us to *fix* it, in a more *accurate* and *impartial* manner.

I SHALL only add to the things which have been already offered, that the rule, which I am now explaining, may be turned several ways ; and considered in a variety of lights ; each of which will be more immediately useful, according to the *particular cases*, that occur to us. The *general sense* is, in all, much the same ; but the *illustration* is somewhat different. For example, if we are solicited, to do any office of *benevolence* and *friendship*, it may be properest for us, to take it in that precise view, in which our Saviour has represented it ; *viz.* ‘ that *whatsoever*, we *would*, that men should do to us, we ought also to do to them.’—To prevent acts of *abuse* and *injury*, the opposite view of it seems to be peculiarly adapted ; *viz.* ‘ that *whatsoever*, we *would not*, that others should do to us, we *ought not* to do to them : Or else, that we be careful that there be *nothing*, in any part of *our* conduct towards our fellow-creatures, but what, upon mature deliberation, we should think *reasonable* in *their* conduct towards us,’—And, finally, to put a stop to all *extravagant* demands, all *extraordinary* pretensions, and claims of right, from *others*, the rule may be put in a new light, and stated thus, ‘ that *whatsoever*, we should think *unreasonable*, to do for any man, were he in *our* circumstances, and we in *his*, it is against all *proportion*, all principles of *equity*, to *expect* from him.’

SUFFER me to make one observation more, before I conclude this head, which is this, ‘that though, as has been already suggested, in all cases, that are for the *good* of particular persons, and not *detrimental* to society, we may innocently fix our *expectations* from *them*, as the *measure* of our behaviour towards them; it will not hold true on the contrary, *viz.* that if I think it *allowable*, that *another* should take *advantages* against me, to my prejudice, I may lawfully do the *same*: Because, I can have no just pretence to *injure* him in *his* property, though I may have a right to *dispose* of *my own*.’ There is no *parity* in the circumstances; which there must be to render the action equitable: For if he knows that *I consent*, he does *me* no *wrong*, but, till I am fully assured of *his consent*, I am highly *injurious* to *him*. And if this single thing was but fairly considered, we should not, I am persuaded, find so many *mean arts* used, nor such ugly appearances of *treachery* and *deceit*, in the *commerce* of mankind; but it would be carried on in a more open and generous way, and more free from the very *suspicion* of baseness, and dishonesty. This may suffice for the explication of this rule of equity: Let me now endeavour, briefly, to shew the great *propriety*, and *excellence* of it.

AND this appears, FIRST, from hence, ‘that *the reasonableness* of it is very *plain* and *obvious* to *all* capacities; upon which account, it is the better fitted to be an *universal* rule.’ In proportion as any *law*, or *rule of action*, is obscure, perplexed, or doubtful; it loses just so much of its authority, and influence. In like manner, if the *reasons* of it are too subtle and abstracted, and lie too deep for vulgar discernment; it must, of consequence, have the less regard paid to it. And, if it be bound upon us by
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mere authority, it cannot come with that weight, and universal constraining efficacy, as if *authority* and *reason* went together, and joined to enforce it. *Authority* may prevail with men to *obey*, while the sense of it remains strong in the mind ; but if it appears to be *arbitrarily* exercised, it will not only be the less revered, but persons will be apt to imagine, that as it had no reason for *giving* the law, it can have none for *insisting* on the *observation* of it ; and that what was *so lightly* enjoined, might be *as lightly* dispensed with. And as for *metaphysical* arguments, and *nice refined* speculations, what *small effect* have they always had, in *regulating* the conduct of mankind, against the force of inclination, prejudice, or interest ? They please as amusements, gratify curiosity, are admired as the exercises of an acute genius ; but it is scarce ever known, that, of themselves alone, they leave such *impressions*, as *warm* the heart, and *rectify* the errors of the life. But those things, the *reasons* of which are obvious, and always appear in a clear and distinct light, strike powerfully, and are of *general* influence. We cannot *suppress* our *sense* of their importance, so far, but that it will always *rise* again, upon the least reflection ; and, either prevail with us to act conformably to our inward convictions, or fill us with uneasiness and remorse. When we see clearly the *wisdom* and *usefulness* of any rule of morality, we must be the more easily *disposed* to yield obedience to it ; and *inclination*, and *duty*, will assist and strengthen each other.

Now this is the case, with respect to the *general rule* of equity, which we are at present considering : The *fitness* of it is next to *self-evident*. It is not to be *deduced*, by a long train of reasoning, from *obscure* and *remote* principles ; but is founded on this *single* truth, and springs necessarily from it (a truth easily apprehended,

hended, and assented to by all) *viz.* the *natural equality* of mankind. For though there is a great difference in the capacities of men, and the external advantages which they enjoy; and consequently, as was before suggested, *one* precise method of behaviour cannot, with any propriety, be prescribed to *all*; yet considered as *men*, united in one *common* nature, they are *so far equal*, that, in the same *circumstances*, they have all a right to the same *treatment*. The *superior*, for instance, ought not to use his *inferior* more *harshly*, than the *inferior*, if he was advanced, and the *other* in a low depressed condition, might justly use him. And whoever refuses to submit to this rule of proportion, ‘acts not as a *man* towards *men*; but as if he was, originally, of a *different* and a *higher* order; and, consequently, had not an *accidental*, but a *natural*, claim, to peculiar *distinction* and *respect*.’

BUT farther, as the reasons, of this *Christian rule* of justice, are very plain, and universally obvious; ‘it is likewise of a vast *compass*, extending to *all* the duties of *social* life, in every situation and character.’ It takes in, not only every part of *strict justice*; but all the various branches of *charity* and compassion, and all the proper offices of *friendship*, and *generosity*. For, under each of these heads, it is as *true*, as in matters of mere justice, and founded on the same *general principles*, that *whatsoever* we may *reasonably* expect from *others*, *they* may as reasonably expect from *us*. Again, it is a law to our *thoughts*, as well as to our outward behaviour. For if we imagine *ourselves* to be *injured*, when any entertain an ill opinion of us, through a rash and ill-natured prejudice, or on weak or improbable grounds; and express an high resentment against us, for slight and involuntary offences, *we* ought, ourselves, carefully to *avoid* the like *excesses* of censoriousness, and malice.

FINALLY, this excellent rule reaches to every difference of *advantages*, whether natural or acquired ; to every *age* and *character* ; since no case, no circumstance, can be *exempted* from it, which relates to the conduct of *mankind* towards *each other*. For, though it is not in our power, *actually* to *alter* the state of the world ; yet, in every instance that can be named, we can *suppose* a change of conditions, or, *imagine* ourselves to be in other circumstances. The *rich man* may, in idea and reflection, substitute himself in the place of the *poor* ; a *parent* in that of his *children* ; a *master* in that of his *servants* ; and so on the contrary : And then he has nothing to do but to consider, what he might fairly demand, if either of these was his *real situation*, and to make *that* the *general guide*, and *rule*, of his actions. Thus the mutual, and necessary, duties of all the several *relations* in human life, may, by the help of this *one principle*, be impartially stated, and thoroughly understood. Which leads me to another remark, that is a farther demonstration of the excellency and usefulness of it, *viz.*—

‘ THAT it is a rule, *easily applicable* to particular cases.’ There is no way of proving this, which is a matter of *fact*, like that of producing direct and unexceptionable examples of it, and trying, how it will succeed in the application. If the experiment we make answers the end proposed, this must afford the fullest and highest conviction : Whereas reasonings drawn from the *abstract nature* of things, and not confirmed by observation, are not only, to the generality, more intricate in themselves, but more liable to dispute and evasion.

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WOULD we, then, that our *fellow-creatures* regard us, according to our *real merit*? If so, it must be *our duty*, by the rule of equity, to render honour to whom honour is due. Would we take it *ill*, if they should *repine* at our happiness? Do we expect, that they *sympathize* with us in our afflictions, and *bear a part* in the joy of our prosperity? We are, then, bound constantly to maintain the same *friendly* dispositions, and *generous* concern for the welfare of all mankind. Or would we think it *hard* to be unjustly *traded* and vilified, or, if any man should seek to advance his own *interest*, by methods that tend to our *dishonour*, or *prejudice*? This clearly shews, that our reason *condemns* these vices, and that *we ought*, likewise, to *abstain* from them; and on the contrary (since we esteem it a debt of *justice*, owing to *ourselves*) to be exceedingly careful of our neighbour's character, to take all opportunities of defending it, when it is weakly, or maliciously, attacked; to do every thing, in our power, to secure to him his just praise and esteem, and cheerfully to sacrifice many little conveniences, to promote his greater good.

THIS matter may be farther illustrated, by instances taken from the *commercial* concerns of life. 'Should we imagine ourselves to be treated *unfairly*, if any should impose on our *ignorance*, and *unskilfulness*? Should we think we were *cheated*, if *bad* wares should be *sold* to us, *knowingly*, at the highest price that is given for the *best*? Sould we esteem it an argument of a *base* and *ungenerous* spirit, for a man *treacherously* to abuse the *confidence*, that is reposed in him, and use us the *worse*, because we professed our *want* of *judgment*, and trusted entirely to his

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honour? Should we look upon him as *dishonest*, who when his circumstances were *desperate*, on a *bare possibility* of *retrieving* a broken fortune, demanded *credit* for *much more* than he was ever *likely* to be able to *pay*; and thereby involved, together with *himself*, many innocent and industrious *families*, in want and misery?—We must, then, be utterly inexcusable, and self-condemned, if *these faults* are found in *our own* conduct; and all the *bad characters* which we are so liberal in bestowing on such *offenders* as these, when our *private interest* is immediately affected, will be *our own*, with a double share of guilt and infamy. And whosoever carefully attends to the *Christian rule of equity*, must clearly perceive *his duty* in these, and most other, cases, that can happen in *society*.

I SHALL conclude what relates to the article of *Justice*, with only observing, that all *revealed* religion recommends it, in the strongest manner, as an immutable branch of virtue, that can never be dispensed with; and, without which, all the forms, and the most splendid external pomp, of piety are not, merely, insignificant and trifling, but despicable and hateful superstition. And it is very remarkable, that sometimes, in the *New Testament*, especially, when a *summary* of religion is given, *nothing more* is *distinctly* mentioned, besides the right government of the passions, and relative and social duties——‘Because, mankind, in all ages, have been more *defective* in *these* duties, than in *outward offices* of piety and devotion; and because, it is almost always some *sensual*, or *sordid*, inclination, that is *the cause* of *irreverence* to almighty GOD: So that, if men entirely dropped all *prospects* of *unrighteous* gain, all *unwarrantable* pursuits, *injurious* to others, and restrained all *excesses* of appetite, they would naturally *love*, and *esteem*,

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a being infinitely glorious and amiable, and could scarce have a *temptation* to the contrary. For the duties of piety are neither so *difficult*, nor so *expensive*, where there is no *base interest* to pursue, or *passion* to gratify, as the regular *government* of *ourselves*, and a strict inflexible course of *equity*, and *goodness*.

C H A P. XI.

Of Self-love, and its excesses: Or, Selfishness, and Benevolence compared.

SELF-LOVE, it must be allowed, is, in the *general* consideration of it, not only *lawful*, but *inseparable* from human nature. It is an *universal* principle; not a mere instinct of *sense*, but a dictate of *reason*. We cannot help approving it as *right* and *fit*, nor wish to be deprived of it; but, the more we think and argue about it, shall find ourselves the more strongly pressed to *cherish* and *improve* it. For there never *was*, and never *can be*, a man, who has not lost the *understanding* and *passions* of a man, but must *ardently desire* his own happiness, and have a *strong aversion* to pain and misery. ‘To attempt, therefore, by any rules of *philosophy*, or any scheme of *religion*, to *suppress* it altogether, is, in truth, to attempt, not to *refine* but to *destroy* human nature.’

BUT it is wisely ordered, by the great author of our being, that *every passion*, which he has placed in us, may not only be of *signal use*, if its natural design and tendency be regularly pursued; but is capable also, by being *perverted*, of causing much *vexation* and *misery* to ourselves, and *injury* to others: For this is a demonstration founded in nature, and obvious to all capacities, of the necessity of *self-government*; and that we should
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take the utmost care, to keep all our affections and appetites within those *bounds*, which the *Creator* has prescribed, This appears in nothing more plainly, than in the passion of *self-love*. For whatever *beneficial* purposes, it was *originally* designed to serve, by the wise and gracious former of human nature, nothing is more generally *abused*; and the *irregularities* of it are, sometimes, vastly great, and occasion the utmost confusion: ‘As, indeed, the most fatal *disorders* and *evils*, in human life, spring, for the most part, from the *excesses* of passions that are *natural*; and are frequently (though they go by distinct names) but *branches* of this *universal principle* of *self-love*, which operates so necessarily, and powerfully, in all mankind.’

AND, FIRST, ‘we are criminal in a high degree, when *private interest* is the *sole spring*, and *end*, of our actions, and the *point*, in which all our views terminate.’ It must be evident, upon the least reflexion, ‘that the *love* of the *public*, is an *original* principle in mankind, as well as *self-love* and that those *affections*, which strongly excite us to seek the good of others, and promote the universal happiness, are as *essential* a part of our frame, as *that* which directs to self-preservation, and the pursuit of private good.’ To suppress, therefore, and extirpate those generous dispositions, and act only from narrow and selfish motives, must be extremely *unnatural*, and form a very *base* and *worthless* character. Could we suppose any rational being to be so made *at first*, and to have no views beyond its own advantage, no sentiments of friendship, and public-spiritedness, we should immediately conclude, that it was very *imperfectly* formed, of very little *significancy* and *use* in the creation; and there could be none of those marks of the *wisdom* and *goodness* of the creator, which

which appear, so gloriously, in the *present composition* of human nature.

MUST I not then debase and dishonour myself, if I act only from *selfish* considerations? Nay, am I not *much more* infamous, than I could be, if I was originally formed, only with such low and contracted affections? If the latter was my case, it would be my *misfortune*, a defect that might be *lamented* indeed, but for which, I should not be at all *answerable*. But if I wilfully *efface* the sentiments of disinterested goodness and compassion, which the all-wise creator has so strongly *impressed* on my nature, I make myself a *monster*; and, consequently, must bear all the guilt and reproach of it. If the inclinations, which I find in my soul, to advance the *good* of *mankind*, are not to be improved and strengthened, *what end* can they serve? Is not my very nature a *strange, unaccountable*, constitution, nay a downright *absurdity*, if I am supposed to have such *inbred*, powerful, sentiments as these, and necessarily to *approve* of them as amiable and excellent, and yet am not obliged to follow their *direction*?

It is a self-evident truth, that mankind were made, to be influenced, by more *worthy and sublime* principles, than a regard to a little, sordid, private interest, that is *inconsistent* with, or even *distant* from, the general good: And, therefore, their conduct must be extremely irregular, 'when the single point they have in view, is the pleasure, or advantage that may accrue to *themselves*; and when, *so far* as they go even in the *social* virtues (which, in persons of so degenerate a turn we may reasonably presume, will be no very great *length*) when, I say, *so far* as they go in the practice of *Justice*, and performing any *kind*
office

office for their fellow-creatures, instead of being determined by the intrinsic *rectitude*, and *amiableness*, of such a behaviour, their views are—either to gain *applause*; to make themselves *friends*; to induce the world to place greater *confidence* in them; to recommend themselves to the *esteem* of those, from whom they have particular *expectations*; or else, under specious pretences of virtue and nobleness of mind, to *impose*, the more easily, on such as are of frank open tempers, void of suspicion, and, thereby, *serve* some *base* design.

THIS, perhaps, may look like *aggravating* matters, and *putting cases*, that never *did*, and it may be thought by some, never *will*, happen. Mankind, it may be said, are hardly capable of being so wofully *depraved*, or of offering such *violence* to nature, as to root out their *innate, strong sense* of benevolence and mercy. And, I am inclined to believe, that this is true, with respect to the *generality*: Nay, farther, that *many* persons, who are, upon the whole, of very *vicious* characters, do things, often, for *justice* and *goodness*' sake, *abstracted* from all other considerations. But, though the *extravagant* degree of *selfishness* which I am now arguing against, cannot but be shocking to every mind, that has any remains of virtue and ingenuity, we shall, I am persuaded, find several things very *like* it, in the course of our observations upon the world: ‘A *few* instances, at least (and it is to be wished, for the *honour* of our *nature*, and the *good* of *mankind*, that they were much *fewer* than they are) of *persons*, who expect *other reward* for doing good, than the glory of the service, and the approbation of their own minds, and who must be *brought* to give that *assistance*, to their fellow-creatures in *distress*, which the common ties of humanity demand, and to which, they are more directly called, by their particular stations and characters: Instances, likewise, where neither

the *merit*, nor *misery*, of an object are so much regarded, as his *circumstance* and *rank* in life, and the *capacity* he may be in of *requiting* our good offices ; where the *rich* are treated with respect, only for their *riches*, and the prospect we have, from them, of advantage to *ourselves* ; and the *poor* cruelly neglected, merely on account of their *penury* ; *i. e.* because, in this latter case, we are obliged to exercise *pure, disinterested, charity*—And, finally, too frequent examples of *narrow, groveling, spirits*, who, in matters of importance and difficulty, make a *gain* of obliging their *friends* ; and want to be *hired* even to serve their *country*, though it be *a debt*, which every man owes to society. In all these cases, it is most evident, that the *only motive*, or *determination*, to actions, that have the appearance of generosity and a public spirit, is *a regard to private interest*.

BUT again, men may be said to indulge to an *immoderate self-love*, not only, when their own particular advantage is the *sole* spring, and end, of their actions ; ‘ but, when a view to it is, *so far*, the *predominant* and *governing* principle, that they refuse to submit to any *inconveniencies*, for the benefit of the world around them. A man of a *selfish* disposition, may make no scruple of doing a kind office for his neighbour, when it falls in his way *easily*, and he can do it without *trouble, expence, or hazard* ; but he is not *intent* on doing good, he does not consider this as a *principal business* of his life. His love of himself, and consideration of private interest, *restrains* and *limits*, if it does not quite *destroy*, his benevolence to mankind. He seems to think, that he was born, almost *wholly*, for *himself*, and not designed for happiness in *society* ; and, therefore, when he is called to any services, that are inconsistent with his *ease*, and *pleasure*, and attended with *difficulty* and *danger*, his *selfish* prin-

principles always carry him away, in *opposition* to the general good. Whereas one of kind sensibilities, and dispositions to serve the public, *seeks for opportunities* to be useful; is always *ready* and *open* to beneficent designs, and actions; and, with a noble resolution and steadiness of mind, *sacrifices* private regards, when the *good of the world* requires it.

I SHALL only add, ‘ that the *most criminal* degree of *selfishness* is, when we pursue any *private* pleasures, or advantages, knowing that they directly *interfere* with the *public* welfare, with the natural rights, and liberties, of our *fellow-creatures.*’ But this is so plain at first view, that I need but just mention it; and shall therefore proceed to expose, briefly, the *baseness, guilt, and fatal consequences,* of such a narrow temper, and behaviour.

‘ AND, in general, it must be *subversive* of all *social virtue.*’ The best way of *estimating* the reasonableness, and usefulness, of any principles, is to consider, *what effect,* it would produce, if it prevailed *universally.* If the natural consequence would be, peace and harmony, mutual security and confidence, and promoting the happiness of society; we may be assured, that is a *right* principle: But if, on the contrary, it would necessarily tend to public confusion and calamity; we may certainly conclude, that it is *vicious* and *unnatural.* Now, if *selfishness* was the *universal* principle among mankind, if *every one* was intent on his own *private* advantage, to the neglect of the *general* good, and scrupled not to pursue it by any methods, however injurious to *others,* and inconsistent with the *common welfare;* it is most evident, that there could be no pleasure, no regularity, no convenience in human life, but the world must be a perpetual scene of disorder, and misery.’

THE greatest *happiness* that mankind in common enjoy, plainly arises from *society* : But societies must of necessity be *dissolved*, if, instead of probity, honour, and public spirit, a *selfish* disposition was universally indulged ; that aimed at a *separate independent* advantage, had *no concern* for the good of the *whole* ; and made even justice, and all social obligations, subservient to *interest*. Nay, if we suppose, that selfish men might think it *prudent*, to maintain the general *appearance* of *justice*, as the most likely way to answer *their ends* ; yet, if there was nothing of the sublime principle of *benevolence*, societies, if they could *subsist*, would infallibly be *miserable* ; and the greatest part of the *true* satisfactions of life, (which spring chiefly from *this source*) would be absolutely destroyed.

BUT this leads me to observe, farther, that ‘ the *worst* of *vices* result from that vile, and pernicious principle, which I am now opposing.’ If we consider our own times, or examine the histories of past ages, we shall find, that some of the greatest enormities which mankind ever committed, have had their foundation *here*. To begin with *covetousness*—Whence does it spring, but from a mistaken *private interest*, and that of the *meanest*, and most *sordid*, kind ? What is it, that puts men on getting an estate by *fraud* and *oppression*, and other methods of *guilt* and *dishonour*, but *selfishness* ? What is it, that makes them *betray* their *friends* for gain, or *sell* their *country*, enrich themselves with the *spoils* of *widows* and *orphans*, and harden their hearts against all impressions of *humanity*, but *selfishness*.

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AGAIN, 'from the same source proceeds *pride*; a vice, that, of all others, renders a man most uneasy to himself, most disagreeable to those with whom he converses, and offensive in the sight of GOD. It is an *irregular self-esteem*, that induces us to value ourselves *immoderately*, and expect, that the world should treat us with *uncommon* distinction and honour; that begets an insolent *contempt* of mankind; makes us disrespectful to our *superiors*; rude and assuming, in our carriage, towards our *equals*; and intolerably imperious, arbitrary, and tyrannical, with respect to those *below us*. 'And *selfishness* and *pride* again, are the parents of *envy*; and of all that *defamation* and *calumny*, that secret *undermining*, *baseness*, and *treachery*, which are the vile arts, commonly used, to lessen the authority and influence of others, and advance *our own*.'

IN like manner, it must appear at first view, 'that *selfishness* is the general cause of *ambition*; one of the most unruly passions of the mind, and attended with the most pernicious effects. It is men's preferring *private* regards, to those which are due to the *public*; and resolving, to make themselves *considerable*, at all *bazards*; that breeds *faction*, and *discontent*, and dangerous *conspiracies* against the security and peace of government; that has *distressed*, and *weakned*, the most flourishing societies; occasioned infinite *confusions*; and spread *desolateness* and *ruin* through the world. It is the very same principle, that occasions *lying*, breaches of solemn *contracts*, *perjury*, and, consequently, the most notorious *violations* of the natural rights of men; that destroys *generosity* to friends, *gratitude* to benefactors, *fidelity* to our country, and even the strongest ties of *natural affection*. And, finally, it makes men pursue an *irregular* private satisfaction, and indulge them-

themselves in *sensual* excesses, not only to the neglect of their own *true* and *solid* happiness; but, also, in defiance of almighty GOD, and the sacred and unalterable obligations of virtue, and religion. 'And since *selfishness* is the direct spring of all *these vices*, which turn the moral creation of GOD quite *upside down*, and destroy all its *order*, and *beauty*; no *more dreadful* misfortune can befall the world, no *surer sign* of its *approaching* misery and ruin, than to have it *universally prevail*.'

BUT, wouldest thou appear in the highest *amiableness*, and *dignity*, of a reasonable being? Wouldest thou *refine* thy nature to a *God-like* lustre? Wouldest thou *partake*, as far as the imperfection of thy frame will allow, of the *highest happiness* of him, who is all-perfect? Imitate his *goodness*; his *universal, invariable*, goodness. The highest stations, of *worldly* dignity, cannot derive such *exalted honour* to their possessors: And the *happiness*, arising from hence, is so worthy our noblest powers, that it will *suffer* greatly by a *comparison* with the pleasures of the *epicure*, the pleasures that result from worldly *power* and grandeur, or any other, the most admired and applauded *sensual* gratifications. For the latter are, *most* of them, mere brutal enjoyments, and *all* empty, superficial, and transitory; and attended with uneasy and bitter reflections: Whereas the pleasures of *benevolence* are truly sublime; at the same time that they *refresh*, they also *enlarge* and *strengthen*, the mind; and, the oftener they are *repeated*, the more effectually will they fix in it, *great* and *noble* sentiments. They are pleasures that will bear a *review*, and improve upon being *examined*: And, the more a man *abounds* in them, the more solid satisfaction will he enjoy in the *present* world; and have the more comfortable prospect, with respect to his *future* existence.

C H A P. XII.

Of particular branches of Benevolence: *In two*
SECTIONS.

S E C T. I.

Of Mercy, *in its several parts: But chiefly, of Compassion towards the indigent and distressed; and of a placable, propitious, disposition, and the forgiveness of injuries.*

HAVING, thus, largely considered the native excellence, and loveliness, of *benevolence in general*, and, especially, as it stands opposed to the extreme of *selfishness*; I proceed to treat more particularly, of *mercy*, one of the most important branches of it: Which necessarily supposes *a state*, liable to many *imperfections and calamities*; and, as this is the most *true and exact* description of human life, must be a virtue of the *highest*, and most *indispensable* obligation. And, here, I shall mention briefly a few things, that are proper to be remarked, in order to our forming a clear and full idea of it.

IN the FIRST place, then, 'it is not, *merely*, the strong and forcible *instinct* of *compassion*, which is planted in the temper of man;'

man:’ For where nature does *all*, virtue can have *no praise*. It must therefore, upon reflection, be approved of, cherished, cultivated, in order to its being a *moral*, and *meritorious*, disposition.

AGAIN, ‘*mercy* is not a *wild*, and *indiscriminate*, but a *wise*, and *well-regulated*, principle.’ It *distinguishes* between objects, as a dictate of *reason*; and is not impelled and urged on, in its operations, by mere *biasses* and *bent* of nature. For many instances, of *private* tenderness and compassion, may be hurtful to the *whole*: And things merely *mechanical*, however excellent, are the *good fortune* of our constitution only; but, when wrought into a *serious* and *deliberate* habit, they then become a *grace* and an *honour* to it. All virtues are to be ascribed to, and denominated from, *the principles*, from whence they proceed. ‘If *mercy* springs from ostentation, it is an act of *pride*, and not of moral goodness; if from a desire of *popularity*, it is an act of *vanity*; if from a principle of *private advantage*, and gain of any kind, it is debased into an act of *selfishness*.’

I WOULD only add here (to prevent any anxious *doubts* and *scruples* that may arise, from any part of what has now been said) ‘that the *intentions* of the soul, if there be no fault, no corrupt and wicked *biasses*, in the choice of *occasions* and *objects*, will, doubtless, be considered by God, as *real* exercises, and exertions, of *mercy*.’ For, else, the *best*, the most *kind* and *sympathizing*, may meet with very near as *severe measure* in judgment, as the *hardened* and *relentless*: The one, for *mistaken*, and *misguided*, *good purposes*, as the other, for a *profligate contempt* of all the dictates of nature, and piety.

FINALLY,

FINALLY, and to put an end to these previous remarks, ‘our *mercy*, if it be a *right*, must also be a *religious*, temper.’ It must regard GOD as the *author* of the dictates of humanity and compassion; and must practise mercy, as one of his reasonable and equitable *laws*. Now, then, it may naturally be asked, what is the strict and proper nature of *mercy*, and what are the chief instances, in which it is to be expressed? I answer, that all the offices of it may be reduced to one, or other, of the following heads.

FIRST, ‘*Indulgence* to the infirmities, and errors, of our brethren; in opposition to *harshness*, and *severity*;—from a *benevolence* and *softness* of spirit; from a *reflection*, and *experience* in itself, that human nature is very *liable to err*; and that *severity*, for incidental frailties and imperfections, if it were *mutual* and *universal* (as it ought to be, or not to be exercised at all) must put mankind upon eternally harassing, and tormenting, one another.

SECONDLY, ‘*Proportioning* the *services* we expect from them, to their *capacity*, and *strength*; in opposition to *rigour* and *oppression*.’ The contrary to this is a defect of *Justice*; and, consequently, of *mercy*: For justice is the *lowest* virtue, in human, *social* life.

THIRDLY, ‘*Mercy* includes in it, *gentleness*, and *moderation*; in opposition to *stiffness*, and *inflexibility*.’ This is, in a manner, self evident; because an *unyielding* and *unbending* spirit, in societies of *mixed* composition, of *various* humours, and *general* defects, is, in itself, uncongruous and unnatural.

ANOTHER necessary branch of *mercy* is, ‘*compassion* towards the *miserable*, of *all* sorts and degrees; especially, towards the *poor* and *indigent*, in opposition to a *cruel*, and *insensible* temper.’ Upon the very same principles, from whence, true goodness *rejoices, with them that do rejoice*, it also *weepeth, with them that weep**: Having this remarkable *distinction*, from the *sordid* and self-centered spirit, that not *its own* disappointments and calamities alone, but *all the real* miseries of *mankind*, are the moving objects of its *commiseration*.

IN the LAST place, ‘*true mercy* comprehends in it, a *soft*, *relenting*, and *propitious* disposition, towards those who at any time *offend*; in opposition to *extremes* of *punishing*, and an unnatural *delight* in human misery.’ All these particulars are sufficiently evident, upon being thus briefly proposed, and delineated: But, upon the two last branches of *mercy*, now specified, I intend to enlarge more minutely.

AND, FIRST, ‘as to *compassion*, towards the *distressed* and *indigent*.’—This, we must be convinced, is a necessary branch of benevolence, and the want of it an heinous and aggravated crime, by consulting only the *common ties* of *humanity*. Here, *nature*, and *experience*, joining together, force men, in some degree, to acknowledge and *feel* the truth. With these, *reason* perfectly concurs. ‘For, are the race of men an herd of *individuals only*? No. Can they enjoy the *happiness*, prepared for human nature, each *alone*, and *distinct* from all the rest? This is impossible. What are they then, since perfection and happi-

* Rom. xii. 15.

ness cannot be attained, by the *separate* powers and endeavours of each individual, contriving and acting *only* for *himself*? A *community*, no doubt. But can there be a *community*, without a *general* concern and interest, without a *reciprocal*, and *mutual* obligation?'

ADD to this, that this branch of *mercy* is powerfully enforced, by the notion of GOD, 'as the universal *parent* of mankind; The *parent* of rich and poor, high and low, men of all ranks and distinctions; *equally*, indeed, the parent of all.' For as we are, *all*, the *offspring* of this great and most merciful being, and, of necessary consequence, *brethren*; our *obligation* to discharge the duty, which I am now recommending, must be altogether as plain, as is the *mutual relation*, in which we stand to each other: And, consequently, to be *insensible* of the distresses of those, to whom we are so nearly allied, and, much more, to *aggravate* their wants and sufferings, by oppression and injustice, must be, to the last degree, vile and monstrous. I shall content myself with making at present, and under this head of argument, but one remark more, and that is; that neglect of the indigent and miserable, is abusing the *work* of GOD, and treating it with contempt and indignity, as insignificant and despicable, and utterly unworthy our regard. And what is this, but affronting, and treating with despite, the great *Author* of it? Nay behaving, with scorn and cruelty, to creatures formed *after the image* of GOD; and bearing as clear and strong *impressions* of it, in the extent and compass of their rational and moral powers, as, perhaps, we ourselves can boast of. And, therefore, it is very observable, that when GOD appointed, by an express command, that *murderers* should be punished with *death*, this reason

is assigned for it; because, *in the image of GOD, made he man* *.
 ‘Upon the same account, every *lower* injury, every *act* of *insolence* and *oppression*, must be criminal in proportion; and the contrary offices of *mercy* necessary, and indispensable.’

THE same point may be farther argued, ‘from the outward *visible*, and *fixed*, constitution of the world.’ It is an excellent observation of *Solomon*, that *the rich, and poor, meet together; the LORD is the maker of them all* †: The obvious meaning of which is, ‘that GOD has ordained the various *mixtures* of *riches* and *poverty*, *affluence* and *distress*, in the present scene of things, to answer very wise and valuable purposes: And among the *great ends*, that may be answered thereby, this is undeniably *one*; *viz.* to *suit* it to *all tempers*, and afford scope, for *every virtue*, to display itself to advantage.’ If *all* were in plentiful and flourishing circumstances; there would not be such opportunities for *contentment*, and a patient *submission* to providence, as a low and penurious condition affords. On the contrary, were *all mankind* in a state of poverty; the *benevolent*, and *communicative*, temper would not have sufficient *scope*, to exert itself in, nor, consequently, appear in its proper *dignity* and *lustre*. Such, as were of the most compassionate and generous spirits, could do no more than *lament* (and the more *feelingly*, because they could not *relieve*) the indigence and misery of their fellow-creatures.”

WHEREAS by the present *mixed* state of the world, and the *diversity* of ranks and circumstances in it, *all these different* virtues may shew themselves, in their utmost strength and perfection: And, therefore, this must appear to every thinking man,

* Gen. ix. 6.

† Prov. xxii. 2.

to be *one* of the *designs* of providence, in appointing such *differences* in human life. ‘And he, who, instead of being *sensible* of the wants of the poor, *hardens* his heart against the suggestions of mercy, and is so far from *succouring*, that he *triumphs over*, their misery, and *sinks* them down *yet lower*, by an unrighteous *oppression*; as he does not *comply* with the end of providence, in establishing such a scheme and frame of things, but rather *opposes* it: He, I say, *reproaches* the *constitution itself*, as *absurd* and *irrational*, and, consequently, reproaches the *wisdom* of the Creator.’

I SHALL illustrate this, by putting it in a somewhat different light, in which it will most evidently appear, that such cruel *neglecters*, or *oppressors*, of the *poor* and *calamitous* part of mankind, throw contempt on the *sovereign wisdom* of the maker of the world; and that is, ‘for having placed in them such natural *tendencies*, such strong *instincts*, and *propensions*, to tenderness and compassion.’ For, of what *use* are these kind and merciful *affections*, if it be not our duty to *supply* the necessitous, and contribute, according to our capacities, *help* and *relief* to the miserable? Or, what *better* end can they answer, than to be a constant *uneasiness* and *torment* to us; and give us a stronger conviction of the *inconsistency* of the frame of nature?

If such melancholy objects are to be *oppressed*, instead of being succoured (as the conduct of those persons, who are thus void of mercy, declares that it is their *opinion* they *should be*) ‘human nature should have been formed, *only* with sentiments of *cruelty*; with *none* but *passions prompting* to, and delighting in, the *hurt* and *misery* of others; and without any thing of that *softness* (or, as it would then be, *weakness*) of disposition, which inclines to *commiseration*, and oftentimes *interrupts*, and, breaks
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the *force* of, *malevolent* and *injurious* purposes:’ How wofully are such minds *depraved*, whose reason is thus darkened and defaced, and who so notoriously reproach, not barely the *wisdom*, but the *goodness*, of GOD; by supposing, in effect, that it would ever be possible for him, to abandon the *care* of one *considerable part* of his creation; and leave the *poor*, to *perish* in their miseries, without making any *provision* for their relief or comfort. Nothing can be more dishonourable to the blessed GOD, (whose chief *glory* is, his unbounded and unchangeable *goodness*) than to suppose, that he allows the *rich* to riot in *insolence* and *luxury*, without any *emotions* of benevolence and compassion; or, that he has designed, that *some* of his creatures should be *despised*, and *neglected*, by *others*, and *crushed* by their inhumanity, and tyranny. This is a manifest contradiction to *his will*, so clearly and strongly signified, in the whole ordination and frame of nature: Nor, is it possible, upon this plan of conduct, that we can entertain *just* and *worthy* notions of him; because *these* would necessarily lead to an *esteem*, and *imitation*, of his moral character, not only as our indispensable duty, but as our highest ornament and glory.

I SHALL only add, ‘that the *deeper* the distress of our fellow-creatures is, the more *praise-worthy* and *illustrious* is the mercy. The stronger the *prejudice* is, against the exercise of it, the more glorious is its *triumph* and *victory*.’ A *Jew*, of an adverse and hostile nation (to take one, of our blessed Saviour’s own images) relieved by a *Samaritan*; a *Pagan*, by a *Christian*; a *Christian* by a *Mahometan*; where there are strong, though very *absurd* and *unnatural*, prepossessions, against mutual intercourses of humanity: Acts like these, I say, constitute the *heroism* of friendliness, and compassion; and shew, that we are really *partakers*
of

of a divine nature*. And, finally, to have a *peculiar sympathy* with those objects of distress, which the world, *generally, abandons*, shews (in all instances, at least, where their miseries are *accidental and undeserved*) both the *discretion*, and the singular *merit*, of our charity.

BUT, I proceed to the other branch of *mercy*, which I reserved, for a more particular and distinct consideration, and that is; ‘a *soft, relenting, propitious*, disposition, in opposition to *extremes of punishing*, and an unnatural *delight* in human *misery*.’

THIS is represented, by *Christ* himself, under one of the strongest phrases that could possibly be used, to eradicate utterly, all *evil and revengeful* dispositions, out of the hearts of men, *viz. the love of enemies*; and it was intended to denote, not a mere duty of *instituted* religion, but an immutable part of *social morality*. And yet, notwithstanding this excellent design of the author of our religion, the expression itself has through weakness, and for want of understanding the *true meaning* of it, and the *nature of the subject*, been objected to, as too *general, loose, and inaccurate*.—But surely, it can never be imagined, by any reasonable unprejudiced mind, that it was designed to recommend an *inward esteem* of the malicious slanderer, the oppressor, and cruel persecutor, or a *complacency*, in persons of such vile characters; ‘but only, the having *kind and benevolent dispositions* towards them, and a sincere *desire* of their *happiness*.’

* 2 Pet. i. 4.

AND,

AND, indeed, it happens in fact, that, in almost all *moral writings*, whether ancient or modern, ‘*love* most commonly signifies, what it does in this precept of our holy religion, *viz.* benevolence, or good-will; and may be exercised towards particular objects, not only, where there can be no esteem, or complacency, but even, when we are obliged to *punish* them.’ Thus, it is always allowed, that a *parent* may love a wicked and vicious child, though he has the greatest *abhorrence* of his crimes; and to this it is imputed, that he has such a strong *concern* for his well-fare, and ardent *desire* of his *reformation*. Nay, even moderate severity, and a just punishment of his faults, are not only supposed to be *consistent* with love, but to *spring directly* from it.

HOWEVER, the true meaning of our duty will, perhaps, appear more plainly, by considering the representations which are made of it in other passages of the New Testament. It is, therein, described—by forgiving our brother, who hath trespassed against us; by not *rendering evil, for evil, or railing, for railing* *; and, finally, *by not being overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good* †: *i. e.* taking care, that *good-natured* and *generous* sentiments have the ascendent in us, and be not controuled, or extirpated, by *angry* and *malicious* passions; and being always *disposed*, to perform offices of *humanity*, and *goodness*, to an *enemy*, in order, if possible, by such a kind and engaging behaviour, to *conquer* his animosity, and *conciliate* his affection and esteem.

* 1 Pet. iii. 9:

† Rom. xii. 21.

ARE we, then, to sit down *tamely* under affronts, and shew no *resentment* of them? Must we patiently *bear* all the *indignities*, that are offered us, and not endeavour to *repel*, though it be to *his loss*, the *unjust assaults* of an enemy? Is it not *lawful* for us, to *force* him, by all proper methods, to *repair* the wrongs he has done us; and to *disarm* him from doing us any further mischief? ‘Without doubt it is: For *self-preservation* is a dictate of the law of nature.’ Every man has an unquestionable *right*, to *guard* his *person, property, reputation*, against all unreasonable attacks; and to *defend* them to the *utmost*, provided he does it by *just* and *honourable* methods: And ‘*Christianity* makes *no alteration* in the *natural* rights of mankind.’ It no where forbids necessary *self-defence*, or seeking a *legal redress* of injuries,—in cases, where it may be *expedient* to restrain violence and outrage, to maintain private right, and property; and secure, to the honest and peaceable, the advantages of civil life: But all the explanations which it gives, of the duty of *forgiving injuries* are perfectly *consistent* with this.

For the substance, of what it recommends and inculcates on this head, relates, chiefly, ‘to the *temper* of the *mind*, *viz.* that we be *ready* to *pass by* small affronts, and not *forward* to *execute* private revenge; that we be *disposed* to put the most *candid* interpretation, on the designs and actions of those, who have injured us, and to make all favourable allowances, that the nature of the case will admit; and that, while we suffer the greatest *wrongs*, we maintain a *general benevolence* or *good-will* to our enemies, a sincere *desire* of their welfare upon the *whole*, and a constant *inclination* upon all *proper* occasions to

promote it.—This, I say, is the notion of *forgiving injuries*, as it is stated, and explained, by the Christian religion.

‘THE Gospel, therefore, proposes the *example* of GOD, in his *condescension* towards sinful men, as the general *rule* and *measure*, of that *lenity* and *forbearance*, which *they* ought to exercise towards each other.’ Now the utmost, that can be inferred from hence, is, that if our *offending* brother is so ingenuous, as to *acknowledge* his offence, and by making all the *reparation* that is in his power, gives us sufficient reason, to think his *repentance* sincere; we are bound, again, to receive him into our *friendship*, and never *upbraid* him with past faults, but to be *as heartily*, and *entirely*, *reconciled* to him, as if he had never given us any *just ground* of *offence*; as we expect, that GOD, upon our unfeigned repentance and reformation, will receive us into *full favour*, and remember our iniquities no more: And that in other cases, after the *example* of the same most merciful and compassionate being, we *incline* rather to *gentle* methods, than to *demand* a hasty and rigorous *satisfaction*, for every affront that is offered us; nay, that we, *still* preserve *benevolent* affections, towards an enemy, though he be *unrelenting* and *inflexible*: There is *nothing* in all this (which every one, who has examined particular passages, must see to be the *doctrine* of the *Christian* revelation) that, in the least, *disallows* of that self-defence, which reason, and the laws of our country, direct to.

NAY, it is far from being a *paradox*, ‘that a man may *forgive* an injury, at the same time, that he *seeks* a *legal redress* of it’. For he is to be considered, both as a person, who has received a *private wrong*; and as a member of *society*; which sustains, likewise, *some damage*, by the injustice and violence, which
every

every one of its *members* suffers. Now it is most evident, that he has *no right* to *forgive* the injury, so far as the general interests of *society* are concerned ; and, therefore, must be obliged, when it is necessary to do *justice* to the *public*, to *prosecute* the offender. But, he may be said to forgive the wrong, so far as it is *personal*, and relates to *himself* as the *immediate* sufferer, if (according to what the *Gospel* teaches) instead of indulging rancour and malice, and forming mischievous designs, against one who has injured him, he is ready to do him any *private* services, that are not *inconsistent* with necessary *self-defence*, and the general happiness.

WHEREAS, if he *industriously*, and *unnecessarily*, blackens his reputation, and makes it *his business* to spread disadvantageous stories of him, and distress him in his affairs ; if he *seeks* for occasions to *return* him ill offices, and sticks, neither at treachery, nor open violence, to accomplish his design ; *such a retaliation* of injuries is criminal revenge : Because, in these cases, the evil intended can answer *no other* end, than to gratify a *malicious* mind ; it proceeds not, from *reason*, but from *irritated* and *ungoverned passions* ; and can be executed *only*, for the sake of *doing evil*, and the *unnatural pleasure*, which he takes in the *misery* of a fellow-creature.

IT is certainly our duty, though we may have a just resentment of the injuries, which an enemy has done us, not to forget that he is *a man* ; who partakes of the same nature, and has the same passions and infirmities, with ourselves, and who, as we are, is formed after the image of GOD. And this thought will not only restrain us, from actually *doing* him a mischief, but from *wishing* his hurt ; from *rejoicing* in his infelicity, as well as from being *instrumental* in *procuring* it. For rancour and malice,

lice, lurking in the *heart*, even though it were so restrained (which, indeed, is scarce possible) as not to discover itself in any *outward acts* of insult, must be as *inconsistent* with that *forgiveness* of enemies, which is made, by *Christ*, an indispensable condition of our having our offences, against *God*, forgiven — as the *actual rendering evil, for evil*: Because, *God* principally regards the *temper* and *disposition* of the mind; and *such a temper*, as this, renders us most unlike to him, and, of consequence, the objects of his aversion; and, besides, is, in the very nature of the thing, destructive of our rational perfection and happiness.

I SHALL only add, that particular care has been taken, by the author of our religion, to preserve to this noble and generous virtue, which I am now explaining, its *utmost scope* and *latitude*. For, when *Peter* came to him, and said, — *Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven* * — By which, as I apprehend, he intended, in general, to instruct his disciples, that their charity should not be *narrow* and *confined*, but of most *extensive* influence; or, in the language of *St Paul*, that it should *suffer long*, and be *kind* (notwithstanding repeated affronts and indignities) *hoping all things*, and *enduring all things* †. Suffer me, now, briefly to alledge some of the principal *reasons*, by which, the practice of this duty is *enforced*.

AND, in the *FIRST* place, ‘I would urge the practice, of this branch of benevolence, from the most worthy and generous of all motives — *its own excellence*.’ For what can be more *noble*,

* Mat. xviii. 21, 22.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 17.

than to preserve a *steady inclination* to do good, amidst the strongest *provocations* to the contrary; to *moderate* unruly anger, and *govern* our passions in such a manner, as that they shall never be injurious, and hurtful, to *society*? I appeal to the *reason* of all mankind, which is an argument of *truer greatness* of mind—to be able to *despise* affronts, or, at most, to *resent* them only *so far*, as self-preservation, and the order of the world, require—Or, to suffer ourselves to be so *irritated* and *inflamed* by them, as to lose our *reason*, and that *tenderness* of disposition, which is so suitable to our nature, that it is justly stiled *humanity itself*, in sentiments of rage and cruelty? To *lessen* the *sum* of *human misery*, by our meekness and forbearance; or, to *aggravate* it, by a retaliation of injuries, and a furious pursuit of revenge? To *extinguish* the *flames* of discord, or to *pour oil* upon them? And, in short (which is the same thing) to be, like *guardian-angels*, promoters of peace, and ministers of public good; or instruments of confusion and misery?

SOLOMON, who had carefully studied, wherein true wisdom, and the perfection of human nature, consist, very justly observed, that *the discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression* *. ‘For if we follow the wild and unruly motions of *revenge*, it will have a tendency to draw on *fresh* insult, and provoke *stronger* and more *heightnea* animosity, on all sides.’ Such a conduct, therefore, as it *increases* the violence and injury to *society*, instead of *putting a stop* to it, must, of consequence, be irrational. And, certainly, ‘it is the *perfection* of goodness, to be *uniform*, and *constant* to itself, to be *free* and *uninterrupted* in its exercise, amidst the greatest *temp-*

* Prov. xix. 11.

tations to malice and ill-nature ; because, this shews, that it will stand the *test*, and is quite pure and genuine.' Whereas, a *disposition* to do good, that is *checked* and *restrained*, by every little affront, whether real, or imaginary ; and, consequently, instead of standing on a *solid* and *consistent* foundation, is at the mercy of ten thousand *accidents* ; and is, not only, not *strong* enough, to *determine* the mind, in opposition to the bent of *its own* passions, but *depends* on the follies, passions, and humours of *others* ; so *precarious* a goodness as this, I say, can be but a *low* attainment.

So that it appears, upon the whole, that a readiness to forgive injuries, the love of enemies, and an inclination, on all proper occasions, to return good for evil, are certain *evidences* of a *great* mind. ' These are, indeed, *exalted* virtues, that men, of *narrow sordid* tempers, *cannot* practice.' Such may *love those*, that *love them* ; they may have a *sense* of benefits received, and *gratitude*, or *interest*, may oblige them to *some return* of good offices : But to desire the *happiness* of those, who are bent on our *disgrace*, to *compassionate* their distresses, who *seek* our hurt, and *rejoice* in any evils that befall us ; to treat them, with *candour*, and *humanity*, though they pursue us, with unreasonable *reproaches* and *injuries* ; and to be *helpful* and *beneficial* to such, who have not only never *obliged* us, nor consequently, in strictness, *deserved* any thing from us, but who, we have the utmost reason to believe, will not have the *gratitude*, or *honour*, to *requite* our services ; this is the *noblest* disposition of human nature, and shews it in its *highest dignity* : This is charity improved to its *utmost pitch* ; because it is free from all *mean* or *selfish* views, and exercised only *for the sake of doing good*.

THIS argument is urged, with admirable strength and beauty, by our blessed saviour himself, in the following passage: *For if ye love them, that love you, what thank have ye? [i. e. what extraordinary virtue, or merit, is there, in such an action as this, which is natural to the worst of men?] For sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them, who do good to you, what thank have ye? For sinners, also, do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? For sinners, also, lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But [if ye would exercise a charity, that is truly noble and generous] love your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the highest: For, he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye, therefore, merciful, as your Father, also, is merciful*.*

INDEED, the world, has been so miserably *deluded*, as to make *revenge* a point of honour, and to tax the generous virtue of *meekness*, with cowardice, and unmanly baseness of spirit—As if a man could not be *truly great*, without being a *fury*; and erecting the *monuments* and *trophies* of his greatness, by blind *rage* and *passion*, and upon the *ruins* of gentleness, and moderation of spirit: And as if a *proper resentment* of injuries, so far as is necessary for self-defence, and to preserve the peace and order of *society*, was not *consistent* with *these duties* of the *Christian* religion. Whereas, in truth, *revenge*, and not meekness and forbearance, is the *weakness* and *imperfection* of human nature; is destructive of all *worthy* and *exalted* qualities; and has its foundation in *cowardice*, or *cruelty*. For it certainly, argues a want of

* Luke vi. 32, 33, 34, 35, 36.

just reflection, and *calm greatness* of mind, to endeavour to *get rid* of an *enemy*, by *any methods*, that *reason*, and *religion*, do not warrant. And, when men proceed *farther*, in their *resentments*, than their own security, in conjunction with the general good, requires, all the injuries, which they do him, must be for the *pleasure* they take in his misery; and, consequently, must proceed from a *savage* disposition, which delights in *mischiefs* for *mischiefs sake*: Than which, it is impossible to conceive of a more *corrupted*, and *profligate*, state of human nature.

BESIDES, *true greatness* of mind *consists*, in keeping all our passions, and resentments, under a *just command*, *i. e.* in a *due subordination* to the good of society, and the general happiness of our fellow-creatures. This is *the end* of all *wise* punishments, divine, or human; and, not *merely*, the inflicting *evil* and *misery* on the offender. But this plain, and most excellent, *rule* of *wisdom*, and *mercy*, a strict *retaliation* of injuries evidently *opposes*. So that, upon the whole, we have reason to conclude, that it has been *justly* esteemed one *chief* excellence, of the *Christian* religion, to have inculcated a benevolence *so large* and *diffusive*; as not only takes, within its compass, our friends, and benefactors; or such indifferent persons, who have never offended or injured us; but extends even to *enemies*; in imitation of the *universal goodness* of the Creator, and Father of mankind.

BUT, besides the *baseness* of revenge in itself, *Christianity* has proposed two other motives, which I cannot wholly omit, because they are, perhaps, better adapted, to strike the generality of mankind. We are, therefore, taught *not* to *avenge* ourselves; because *vengeance* belongeth unto GOD*. The *general*

* Rom. xii. 19.

sense of which passage is this, ‘ that the great governour of the world, when he calls all mankind to an account, will vindicate our integrity from the unjust aspersions, that have been cast upon it, redress all our grievances, and amply reward our patience and meekness under indignities and wrongs; and, at the same time, will cloath all our malicious slanderers, and implacable enemies, with shame. He will, then, effectually decide all the controversies, that lie between us. And since he is the supreme judge of the world, who, alone, is able to render to every one according to his deeds; for men, to execute their own private vengeance, is, in effect, to usurp his prerogative, and thrust themselves into his judgment-seat.’ And,

SECONDLY (which is the most awful consideration of all) ‘ we ourselves, shall certainly meet with the severe and dreadful fate of the cruel, and unmerciful; if we, from our hearts, forgive not, every one, his brother, their trespasses *. For it is the voice of nature, confirmed and ratified by revelation, that he shall have judgment, without mercy, who hath shewed no mercy †. And, indeed, with what consistency, or shadow of justice, can such a one hope for the pardon, of his numerous and aggravated offences, committed against GOD, who refuses to forgive the little, and, comparatively, trifling, affronts, which he receives from his fellow-creatures? How can such expect the remission, of their vast debt of ten thousand talents, from the supreme lord and judge of the world; who are unwilling to exercise patience towards their brethren, but, on the contrary, persecute them with the utmost sternness and barbarity, for the small debt of an hundred pence ‡? Can a heart, inflamed by merciless and inexorable resentment, presume to pray to GOD, to avert his vengeance?

* Mat. xviii. 35.

† Jam. ii. 13.

‡ Mat. xviii. 24, 28.

Or he, who entirely *shutteth up his bowels* of compassion, have the *confidence* to *implore* divine favour? And since all, who are of this character, must expect at last to be treated, with the utmost *rigour* of *justice*; how great will be their *confusion*; and how necessarily must they *sink*, under the *weight* of all their sins *unpardoned*?

MOST excellent, as well as strong, and pertinent to the present purpose, are the words of the son of *Syrach*, in the book of *Ecclesiasticus* (which, though it be ranked among the *apocryphal* writings, contains many moral reflexions, of the greatest importance and advantage, towards the right conduct of life)—*Forgive thy neighbour the hurt, he hath done unto thee; so shall thy sin, also, be forgiven, when thou prayest. One man beareth hatred to another; and doth he seek pardon of the LORD? He showeth no mercy to a man, that is like himself; and doth he ask forgiveness of his own sins?—Remember thine end, and let enmity cease: For, he that revengeth shall find vengeance from the LORD; and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance* *.

AND as it is evident, from the passage just cited, that the *wiser* and *better* sort of *Jews*, for a considerable time before the coming of *Christ*, had the same general notions of the necessity of *forgiving injuries*, and of the wickedness and guilt of *revenge*, with *those*, which were so strongly inculcated, by *his* most holy religion: So it is easy to prove, that this was, likewise, the doctrine of the genuine and undoubted *scriptures*, of the *Old Testament*. *Solomon's* evidence has been, before, produced; who expressly asserts, that it is the *glory* of a man to *pass over a transgression* †. *Rejoice*

* Eccles. xxviii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

† Prov. xix. 11.

not, says the same writer, *when thine enemy falleth, let not thine heart be glad, when he stumbleth; lest the LORD see it, and it displease him* * : - And again, *if thine enemy hunger, give him bread to eat, and if he thirst, give him water to drink: Say not I will recompence evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee* †. And, to add no more, *Job*, whom the *Jews* acknowledge as an inspired writer, renounces his having ever rejoiced, *at the destruction of him that hated him, or lifted up himself, when evil found him*; and says, farther, that he *suffered not his mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul* ‡.

NAY, with respect to *Moses* himself (the first great compiler of the religious, and moral, *institutes* of the *Jewish* dispensation) the point is equally clear: And in these two views—FIRST, that, as a public *community*, they were obliged, by *his law*, to love, and practice *kindness*, and *mercy* to all mankind. Hence we find, that he has directly inculcated, what our Saviour stiles *the second great commandment of the law* §, viz. *thou shalt love thy neighbour, as thy self* ||. And, that by the word *neighbour*, was not intended their *brethren* only, who were of the same *nation*, and *religion*, with themselves, appears undeniably from the sense it bears in the tenth commandment; and, particularly, in this clause of it, *thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife* ** : Otherwise, it must have been, *only unlawful*, for a *Jew*, to covet the *wife* of a *Jew*, but not, the *wife* of a *Gentile*. But this is rather more clear from the following passage—*The stranger, that dwelleth with you, shall be, unto you, as one born amongst you, and*

* Prov. xxiv. 17, 18.

† Chap. xxv. 21. and xx. 22.

‡ Job xxxi. 29, 30.

§ Mat. xxii. 36.

|| Levit. xix. 18.

** Exod. xxx. 17.

*thou shalt love him as thy self: For ye were strangers in the land of Egypt**. Which reason, if it has any thing of weight in it, must chiefly denote *strangers*, of a *different religion*: For this was, most certainly, the state of the *Israelites in Egypt*; where they acknowledged not the very *first principles*, on which the *Egyptian superstition* was founded. I shall only add, to make the whole of this affair evident, beyond all colour of just exception; that,

SECONDLY, the declarations of *Moses* against *private revenge* are equally strong and explicate. For if, says he, *thou meet thine enemies ox or his ass, going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again: And if thou see the ass of him that hateth thee, lying under his burthen, forbear not to help him* †. In another passage, the command is more general: *Thou shalt not hate thy brother, in thy heart; thou shalt not avenge or bear any grudge, against the children of thy people* ‡. From all which it appears, that the wicked and unnatural maxim of the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*, viz. *thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy* §, was as contrary to the sentiments of *Moses*, and the prophets, as it is to the religion of the *Gospel*; and that, in recommending the divine dispositions of *propitiousness* and *mercy*, the *revelations* of GOD, in all ages, have been conspiring and harmonious. Nor were the notions, of many of the *old Jews* themselves, at all conformable to the vile inhuman principles, of those great *corrupters* of *their law*. For *Philo* speaking of the *Jews of Alexandria* (in the reign of the emperor *Caligula*, very near the time of *Christ*) says, that they addressed themselves to GOD, af-

* Levit. xix. 34.

‡ Levit. xix. 17, 18.

† Exod. xxiv. 3, 4, 5.

§ Mat. v. 43.

ter this manner,——‘ We rejoice not, O LORD, in the misfortunes and calamities of our enemies; being taught, by thy holy laws, to be strongly affected, and to yield our souls up to the impressions of mercy.’——A very remarkable and noble example this, and worthy the imitation of *Christians* themselves!

WHAT now, with respect to this important article of social morality, have been the dictates of *Heathen* wisdom and philosophy? This will be seen, as to some of the greatest characters in the *Gentile* world, by the following extracts from *antient* writers; many of whom lived, long before the time of the *full* promulgation of the *Gospel*. For instance——*Plato* says, ‘ that injuries, received, ought not to be returned:’ Which is exactly the same doctrine with that of *St Paul*, of *not recompensing evil for evil* *. Again, it is related of *Socrates*, the master of *Plato*, that when one threaten'd to kill him wherever he met him; he answered with an accent, that, according to the relater, seem'd, likewise, to threaten his angry and resentful enemy: ‘ And I also, will, upon all occasions, endeavour to make thee my friend.’ To the same general purpose, was the reply of *Zeno*; who, to a person that said to him, ‘ let me perish, if I am not revenged upon thee,’ made this generous speech: ‘ And I also, If I do not cultivate thy friendship, and endeavour to subdue thine enmity.’ How strictly conformable are these two examples, likewise, to another *Apostolical* rule, viz. *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good* †.

OTHER *Heathens* have asserted, ‘ that he is one of the best of men, who knows, better than others, how to bear injuries ‡;

* Rom. xii. 17.

† Ib. ver. 21.

‡ Menand.

‘ that

‘ that a man, of a revengeful disposition, is rather worse than
 ‘ the person, from whom he has suffered wrong † ; that to return
 ‘ wound for wound, and hurt for hurt, is acting a wild and brutal,
 ‘ tal, and not a humane and manly, part ‡ ; that to be of a
 ‘ vindictive disposition, is the characteristic of a wrathful and
 ‘ contentious, and not of an ingenuous generous, spirit ; and
 ‘ that to be ridiculed, aspersed, and treated with violence, is no
 ‘ disgrace to a wise man § ; but that his real dishonour springs
 ‘ from hence——his insulting, aspersing, and hurting others.’

FARTHER, it is very remarkable, that *Seneca* has made use of the very same argument, to restrain revenge, and enforce forgiveness of injuries, with our blessed Saviour *Christ* himself; *viz.* ‘ that GOD causes his sun to rise upon all :’ And, again, ‘ how many are unworthy of the light, and chearful influences, of the sun, and, yet, it still shines upon, and invigorates them ?’ To which let me add another saying of his, *viz.* ‘ that he, who revengeth can have nothing else to plead, in mitigation of his offence, but this ; that he sins more excuseably’ [*i. e.* being provoked, thereto, by injuries first received.]

LET me add, to these, two or three citations more, for the conclusion of the whole. And the *first* is, the wise observation of *Plutarch*—‘ That it is a high point of humanity, to pass by injuries, without taking revenge on an enemy : And, that if any one, over and above this, is moved by his misfortunes, and shews a mind ready to relieve him, or his children, in any critical exigence of their affairs ; whoever is not charmed with such ex-

† Max. Tyr.

‡ Mufon.

§ Lyfias.

‘altered goodness, is a monster of a black malignant heart, an heart of iron, or adamant.’ The other passages are taken from *Hierocles*, who asserts, that, in the displays, and degrees, of our friendly benevolence, ‘we have a sure rule to go by, *viz.* constantly to imitate GOD: Who hateth nothing that he hath made, though he sheweth singular favour to the good.’ ‘Let us maintain (says the same writer) the measure and proportion of our benevolence, in this order. Love good men in the first, and highest, sense, because, they act up to the perfection of their nature; and wicked men, if it be only on account of our common humanity, though they have nothing, in their inward dispositions, to recommend them to our kind and friendly wishes.’—And by the way, we see clearly, from what has now been offered, that when a *late* author, objecting against the *Christian* precept of *loving enemies*, and our Lord’s own explication of it, insinuates, that in his opinion, *other* schemes of morality (meaning, chiefly at least, the schemes of the *philosophers*) are, in this respect, more *excellent* than the *Christian* morals—he supposes a *competition*, where there is, in the main, no *difference*; and a *preference*, where the doctrines are, upon the whole, *the same*. And this is a plain demonstration, that he has been too inadvertent, and too precipitate, both in his *premises*, and his *conclusion* *.

THUS have I discoursed largely concerning *justice*, *benevolence*, and *mercy*, in many of their principal branches: And the great use, to be made of the whole, is this—That we carefully *cherish*, and *cultivate*, these excellent and divine virtues. Let us not suffer them to be *suspended*, or *weakened*; for want of the ne-

* See Mr. Chubb’s farewell &c. Vol. 1. p. 20.

cessary means, to give them a firmer establishment, and carry them on to a proper degree of strength, and perfection. Let us avoid whatever *tends* to destroy, or obstruct, their *influence*: Either by *clouding*, or corrupting, the natural sense of their immutable *fitness*, and *importance*; or by causing their dictates, to be more *loosely* and *slightly* attended to; but, especially, by introducing, and giving the ascendent, to the *opposite evil* dispositions; which, in all cases without exception, are the necessary *base* of true goodness, both in the conscience, and in the outward course of life. Let us consider, that through mere *inattention*, and an indeliberate *heedlessness* of temper, men may so far *divest* themselves of the principle of mercy, as to have scarce *any feeling* of the wants, and distresses, of their fellow-creatures: They may be so unmoved and insensible, through an *habitual indolence*, as not to find themselves prompted, by a sufficient inward energy, to *relieve* their distresses; and so may be void of *mercy*, and not act the *kind* and *charitable* part in many instances, though they have no *direct inclination* to be cruel.

LET us consider, farther, that if we allow ourselves to neglect but *one plain* act of mercy; this has a natural tendency to harden the heart, more *generally*, against the impressions of benevolence and humanity: And, in like manner, if we violate any single, and acknowledged, rule of justice; we qualify and prepare ourselves, by this *first step*, for the commission of *greater* iniquity. Should it be said, that, what we transgress is but a punctilio; a *lesser*, and with respect to its consequences, or in comparison with others, an *inconsiderable* rule of equity: The answer is obvious, that no *good reason* can be assigned, why we should violate *any* of the laws of equity; and that if we once *begin* such an evil course, we have no principle,
of

of sufficient weight, to stop us from *proceeding* farther in it. 'For if we—plead the *necessity* that we are under, from *custom*, and the general methods of *trade* and *commerce*'—I would ask, is *custom* a warrantable rule of life? Is a *contracted private interest* a fit standard, by which to regulate our conduct? If *this be so*, the boundaries of right and wrong are demolished, the difference of good and evil is confounded, and virtue can have no certain and immutable foundation, in the nature of things.

BUT, on the contrary, if the boundaries of right and wrong, and the distinctions of good and evil, subsist, and the obligations of virtue remain for ever the same, the whole, of this plea, is extremely weak and frivolous. For no man can think himself under a *necessity*, of *staining* his character by base and dishonest *fraud*; if he has not fixed it, as the *governing maxim* of his life—to prefer temporary convenience and ease, and the accommodations of the present world; to the rectitude of his nature, his duty to almighty GOD, the pleasures that attend an uncorrupted probity, and the hope of eternal salvation.

AGAIN, let us choose *justice*, *benevolence*, and *mercy*, for our most intimate, constant, and delightful *companions*; and studiously cultivate, and endeavour to excel in them, whatever our *calling*, *character*, or *station* be: Let us not allow their weight and influence to be, at all, diminished, by any *changes*, that may happen in our *condition*. The practice of these virtues is, indeed, peculiarly *becoming* an *high* and *exalted* rank, because they are a distinguished characteristic of *generous* and *noble* minds; and because those, who are in advanced stations, have superior *opportunities*, and *advantages*, for countenancing and supporting

justice, and exercising diffusive beneficence : And their *example*, if they are of false and malignant dispositions, will *corrupt*, and *propagate* falsehood and iniquity among, the *inferior* part of mankind. But still, it is equally plain and undeniable, that righteousness, and a merciful compassionate temper, are the supports of order and happiness, in *every condition*. ‘ So that the *prince*, the *noble*, the *gentleman*, the *merchant*, the *mechanic*, the *slave*, are subject to *one general*, and *mutual*, obligation.’

REMEMBER therefore, in whatever condition providence may think fit to place thee, that the obligations of justice and mercy spring from the *essential frame* of human nature, as *such*, and not from a *particular situation*, and *accidental occurrences* ; but are binding upon thee, as long as thou art *a man*, *accountable* to GOD, and bound to *conform* to his *moral* perfections. Pursue not mean pleasures, to the prostitution and shame of the *innocent* ; the dishonour of *families* ; the encouraging seminaries of *lewdness*, and *vice* ; and, consequently, in direct opposition to the public good. Let not the love, of *sordid gain*, prevail with thee to use *mean arts*, to the *prejudice* of thy neighbour’s rights ; and *shut up thy bowels of compassion*, against the disconsolate, and necessitous. And as we are all, sometimes, *forced to converse with ourselves*, it must highly concern us to establish, and improve, such dispositions and habits, as, when we *look inward*, will yield an agreeable and pleasing *entertainment*. An open, unsuspecting, and undissembled *honesty*, we shall survey with continual *approbation* : Otherwise, our *own hearts*, and *real characters*, will be the most *ungrateful* objects we can converse with ; and can excite no other passions in us, than *shame*, and *self-aborrence*.

ONCE more, let us consider, that justice and mercy are, in themselves, our most rich and splendid *ornaments*; and vastly more honourable marks of distinction, than any of the badges, and ensigns, of wordly pomp and power; any of the trifling superficial decorations of wealth, and luxury——Because they are *truly amiable*, and *enobling*, qualities, and constitute a *substantial* beauty, and dignity: They assimilate our natures to the nature of GOD, and of all the *wisest*, and *best*, beings in the universe. And the worthiness and lustre, which they confer, is *permanent*, beyond the power of *time*, or *chance*: It will survive the *grave*, and shine brighter and brighter to *all eternity*,

LET any man now, with the least spark of *ingenuity* in his temper, but make these sentiments, and this train of thinking, *habitual* to his mind, and he will reject with generosity, and a high disdain, all *temptations* to fraud, treachery, and cruelty: And find himself strongly determined, to preserve *justice inviolable*, and give to *mercy* (I mean, what is rightly so called, and not a blind and fond affection) a *free* and *unlimited* scope.

ESPECIALLY, if, in the LAST place, he seriously considers, and impresses upon his mind, the *eternal* truth, and fitness, of these principles——that they are *unchangeable* laws of GOD, laws, not arbitrarily joined, but springing from the moral constitution of human nature: That the natural relations, in which mankind stand in relation to each other, and their common dependencies, infirmities, and wants, demand the *constant* and *universal exercise* of these virtues: And that all judicious and worthy men must *applaud*, and GOD himself *esteem*, *reward*, and *honour*, the righteous and merciful; but that men, *like* GOD, must

despise and *abhor*, and the infinite being himself *detest*, and severely *punish*, the oppressor, the tyrant, the persecuter, the traitor ; the injurious of every kind, and in every degree ; and the hard heart, that is unaffected by the sorrows, and complaints, of the miserable — If, I say, any person engages *frequently*, and *seriously*, in such reflexions as these, and endeavours to give them their *full force*, and *due efficacy*, upon the conscience ; it will be next to impossible, that he should *relinquish* the *practice* of such admirable, and most beneficial, virtues, for the *contrary* infamous, and most destructive, vices.

C H A P. XII.

Of particular branches of univerfal Benevolence.

S E C T. II.

Of private friendship ; and, the love of our country.

I SHALL begin this section, with endeavouring to settle the true notion of *private friendship*, and the *love of our country* ; and shewing, how far, they are truly *virtuous*, and *honourable*. And this is the more necessary, because it is undeniable, that *both* these principles have been grossly *abused*. Private friendships have been only little parties in vice, and mischief, and public disorder ; and an attachment, to the interest of particular societies, has been a vile conspiracy against justice, honour, liberty, and the peace and happiness of the world. It is necessary, therefore, that we fix their proper bounds, that none may be led away, by the mere force of agreeable and bewitching sounds, so as to pervert what, if rightly understood, are really *amiable*, and *useful*, into *monstrous*, *unnatural*, and *hurtful*, qualities.

UNIVERSAL benevolence, then, is the *supreme law* to all rational beings, the authority of which ought never to be superseded,

fed, limited, or in the least weakened, by any selfish and partial affections. For if there be any beauty and amiableness, at all, in doing good, the more extended our views are, it must be so much the more meritorious, and honourable; and, consequently, to aim at the *universal* good must be the highest degree of virtue. Again, the happiness of the whole species cannot be *too intensely* pursued; whereas, all other affections are no longer *innocent*, than while they are, at least, consistent with this; are only *virtues*, so far as they directly promote it; but are *base* and *detestable*, when they interfere with it.

To apply this, FIRST, to the case of *private friendship*. When my love of a friend is inconsistent with the regards, which I owe my Country, and, especially, when it opposes the general good of mankind, to whom my services are more strictly and immutably due; it is an *unnatural* affection, and ought to be rooted out of the mind: Because, were it universally indulged, it would introduce the utmost confusion, and an entire subversion of all order, and government. No man can support his friend, by interrupting the course of justice, or violating the rules of honour, who is not an utter stranger to virtue; but, on the contrary, it must be a *noble* action, agreeable to *reason*, and every *benevolent* and *social* principle, to desert him for the public good. And this being the great rule, by which we are to determine, in all cases, concerning the expediency and fitness of private friendships; it follows, farther, that they have nothing truly generous in them, but as they tend to cultivate and improve *universal benevolence*, and are a natural means, to make the *whole species* happy.

FOR if they are not chosen for this reason, because they are best upon the whole, if they are only not contrary to the public happiness, but have no direct influence to promote it, our views must be mean and selfish; and friendship will become a mere matter of *private convenience*, or, else, of *humour*, and *fancy*; in either of which cases, it must be uncertain and variable, as circumstances, opinions, and interests alter; or, finally, it will be only *the love of ourselves*, i. e. of the resemblance of our own way of thinking, dispositions, and manners, in others; and, consequently, nothing like that sublime and heroic virtue, for which it has been recommended, and which, indeed, it is in itself, so long as it is the *medium of universal benevolence*.

AGAIN, all friendship, in order to its being truly rational and praise-worthy, must be founded in *virtue*. For this is the only ground of that esteem and steady confidence, which are inseparable from a worthy and generous friendship. It is in this way alone, that it can be at all useful, or, in any measure, promote the end of every lesser alliance, *viz.* the welfare of the great community of mankind. It is this, that distinguishes true friendship, from the vile cabals of robbers and traitors, men of dark and mischievous designs; who may have all the other characters of it, ‘such as a similitude of tempers, passions, interests, secrecy, confidence, constancy, nay a reciprocal tenderness and affection for each other.’

AND from hence it follows, that the love of a friend must be, in some degree, proportioned to his *real merit*, otherwise, it is foolish and unreasonable *partiality*; and, that we ought to prefer every man before him, that has really a much more *excellent*
and

and *useful* character. In our *esteem*, we must necessarily do it, unless our private affection has blinded and perverted our judgments; and there are cases supposable, in which, if we would not forfeit the glorious title of being the *friends of mankind*, for a little fantastic name of friendship, we must do it in our *services* too. Suffer me to give an instance, in which this is indisputable. Suppose there is an office in the state to be disposed of, of vast consequence to the commonwealth, that requires, to the right discharge of it, very great and distinguished abilities, and that the competition for it lies, entirely, between my most intimate friend, and another, with whom I never cultivated any familiar acquaintance, but have only a general knowledge of; if my friend be unskilful, and indolent, and I have reason to believe, from a thorough experience of his temper, that he will behave ill in it, to the detriment of the public; and the other has a much better judgment, more generosity, steadiness, command of his passions, and is qualified, upon all accounts, for greater usefulness: Can I be long in suspense, which to determine for? Shall I compliment my *friend*, at the expence of my *country*? Such friendships, as these, are so far from being instances of virtue, that they would be justly branded with infamy: And whoever acted thus could have no real benevolence in him, which can never prefer a less good to a greater; nor, consequently, the advantage and pleasure of *an individual*, or the gratifying his selfishness and vanity, to the *general* happiness.

I MAY add, that there is something, in almost all accounts of private friendship, that is in a great measure *mechanical*. A high esteem of a wise, virtuous, and useful character, an ardent zeal to serve our friends, and faithfulness to their interests, are what all may attain to; but the fervour and strength of passion,
which

which sometimes mixes with it, what we may call the *enthusiasm* of friendship, depends, very much, on particular constitutions. — It is the more *gross* part: And though it be highly extolled, and is apt to strike in the relation, and beget the strongest prejudices in favour of friendship, it is rather by engaging our *affections*, than convincing our judgments. — What is most valuable, in it, is the *deliberate* and *rational* part, which is founded on principles of generous and universal benevolence.

AND as there is a great deal *mechanical*; there are other things, very highly celebrated, which, if they are prescribed as general rules and laws of friendship, are *wild* and *romantic*. For instance, it is magnified as a most noble and heroic action, for a man to sacrifice all private interest, and even life itself, for his friend. I shall not dispute the disinterestedness and generosity of it, nor that it may, in some cases, be, upon the whole, very commendable; but there are others, in which, it will be easy to shew, that it may not only be *rash* and *imprudent*, but inconsistent with *prior* and more *important* obligations. — The circumstances of a man's *family*, and of others, whose happiness nearly depends upon him — his importance to *the society*, of which he is a member — and usefulness to *the world*, in general — ought all to be considered, and may be very strong arguments, to prevail with him to preserve himself. And if for the sake of a friend, (who, though possessed of several amiable qualities, may be of little consequence in active and social life) he deprives his children of a kind protector, and guide, or the state of a wife experienced counsellor, the chief asserter and guardian of its liberties; and, consequently, over-rules the strongest impulses of *natural affection*, and the regard he owes his *country*, and *man-*
 VOL. II. O o kind;

kind; his friendship is evidently founded on the ruins of reason, and humanity.

LET us, therefore, separate the *mechanical* part, and all *extravagant transports*, from private friendship, and consider it as a thing, that reason may approve and justify; and we shall find, that it is nothing more, than the *reciprocal esteem* and *affection* of *virtuous* minds, united by a harmony of inclinations, views, and interests, all *upright* and *generous*—that it never exceeds, in any instance, the rules of *justice*, *truth*, and *honour*—that it is always subservient to the great law of *universal benevolence*—and *valuable*, not as it is an attachment to private persons, but as a means of promoting the cause of virtue, and the happiness of the world.

THE same may be said of the *love of our country*, *viz.* that it is a rational and virtuous disposition, not merely, as it is a regard for a *particular part* of the species; but as it has a tendency to advance the *universal good*. To love our country, only because we *were born in it*, without carrying our views to any thing farther, is weak and childish; the prejudice of *education*, and *custom*: This is making *mere chance* the ground, and rule, of our affection, and not the dictates of reason and virtue. Or are we strongly attached, to the inhabitants of a particular spot, only upon this account, our being engaged to defend and support each other? This is *debasing* a very noble principle, and making it *low* and *selfish*. In order, therefore, to raise it to so great and heroic a virtue, as it has been represented, we must seek out some other foundation for it: And the true state of the matter, I take to be this.

FOR their security against injury and violence, and to answer, in the most effectual manner, the great end of their benevolent and generous affections, mankind found it necessary to form *particular societies*. The reason, of supporting these voluntary combinations, is not only *self-defence*; but because such a method is for the *general good*. These two ideas ought never to be separated; because things cannot continue in a regular and natural state, but while the good, of every part, is considered as subordinate to the good of the whole. Now the good of the whole is, unquestionably, best promoted, by every person's having a hearty affection for the society, to which he belongs, and a strong zeal for its welfare: This is his immediate concern; the station and sphere of usefulness, that providence has assigned him. And to be indifferent about his *country*, nay, indeed, not to cultivate an ardent love of it; but, instead of this, to amuse himself with forming idle schemes, for the benefit of *foreign* nations, to whom he is no way related, nor perhaps likely to be known, nor, consequently, to have so much influence among them, as to be able to reduce his schemes, were they ever so beneficial, to practice; all this is very preposterous, and extravagant. It is, in effect, resolving to be useless, and to neglect the good of mankind altogether.

SINCE then a love of the *public*, *i. e.* of the particular civil community of which we are members, and a generous defence of its laws and liberties, is the only way, that men, in general, have, to contribute their share to the happiness of the species; and, if universally cultivated, a natural means of effecting this noble and most desirable end; we must resolve the merit of it chiefly into this, and enlarge it beyond *narrow con-*

tracted views, if we would make it a sublime and heroic virtue: The undeniable consequence of which is, that it is only a rational principle, when it is entirely consistent with, and subservient to, the supreme law of universal benevolence.—It ought never to propose a *distinct interest*, from that of the whole; because, then, it immediately ceases to be an amiable and useful quality, and becomes one of the most vile and mischievous: For instance, when it prompts any to extend their territories, by unjust conquests, to oppress and plunder weaker states, and spread slavery and destruction through the world. In all such cases, when a particular country is a *wicked faction* against the rights of all mankind, which, it would be for the general good, to have suppressed and utterly extirpated; no one, who has any sense of generosity, can rejoice in its success: Love of our country is then a *private* affection, and must give way to the *public* one. And though we may be so far concerned for its prosperity, as to lament the degeneracy and violence that prevail in it, and even to hazard our lives to remedy its disorders; we cannot, surely, wish well to it in any other way, while it is carrying on such pernicious schemes; we cannot rejoice in its victories; without declaring ourselves enemies to justice, liberty, and the universal happiness, and, consequently, being monsters of iniquity and cruelty.

THE sum of the whole is this, that both private friendship, and the love of our country, are only so far amiable and generous, as they are branches of universal benevolence. Nothing can be a virtuous, a great or noble, but what is also a useful, quality; and it is an infallibly right rule of judging in all cases of benevolence, which may seem to clash and interfere with each other, to aim at the *greatest* and *most extensive* good: So that, if there be a real necessity, I am to sacrifice *my friend*, for the sake
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of my country, and my country for the general happiness of mankind. Universal benevolence, therefore, is infinitely the most exalted and heroic spring of action, because the universal good cannot be pursued to *an excess*; but private friendship, and the love of our country, may be so perverted, as to become mischievous and destructive principles. The former is entirely *disinterested*, and can proceed only from the love of goodness, and, consequently, is a most *God-like* disposition; the latter may both spring from *low* motives, and terminate in a *narrow private* interest: The former contains every instance of restrained and partial affection, that has any thing great and lovely in it, and is, therefore, the *chief sum* of social virtue; whereas the latter, without more enlarged views, than the mere pleasure of a friend, or the welfare of our country, forms a character so far from being *eminently* good, that it wants *the very essentials* of true goodness. And this, alone, is sufficient to vindicate our blessed Saviour's scheme of benevolence, and give us an high idea of its *excellency*, and *perfection*. I proceed, however, to offer a few things more directly, in answer to the objection that has been made against it, by a late noble and justly celebrated writer, 'from its not particularly recommending private friendship, and the love of our country*.' And,

FIRST, there is one circumstance, which has been already hinted, that will go a great way, of itself, to remove this seeming difficulty; *viz.* that the *Christian* principle, of universal benevolence, includes both the others, so far as they are founded in *reason*, and have any thing *virtuous* and *praise-worthy* in them. *Universal* benevolence must, in the very nature of the thing, comprehend every species of *real* benevolence; and a command, to promote the general good, necessarily implies all the proper

* *Lord Shaftsbury's Characteristics.*

means of doing it ; and, consequently, every instance of private friendship, and zeal for the welfare of particular communities, that appears to have this natural tendency.

IT is no just objection against moral discourses, that they lay down, chiefly, general rules for the right conduct of life : For these alone are *eternal* and *unchangeable* morality. And the true application of them, to particular cases, must be left to every man's own reason, because it depends on a variety of circumstances, which alter the expediency of things. To apply this to the point before us——The great law of benevolence is, to aim at the happiness of the whole species. This is a proper rule for all mankind, and obliges persons of every complexion and character ; but the manner, in which it may be done, is, to different men, very different, and, consequently, must be referred, in a great measure, to their own judgment and discretion. Nor is this likely to create any confusion ; because general principles are easily accommodated to particular circumstances, where there is an honest mind, and a small degree of reflection : For every one, that thinks, must immediately see, that nothing can be an act of real benevolence, which opposes the universal good ; and will soon discern, in what cases, private friendship, and the love of our country, are fit means to advance it.

LET me observe farther (though the *noble* Author, above-mentioned, seems to think it a *strange* supposition) that private friendship is not a matter of *strict* and *indispensable* duty upon all ; but, for the most part, a *purely voluntary* engagement. General benevolence is a fixed, immutable, and universal duty. An esteem of wise and virtuous characters is always rational, because it is necessarily connected with the love of virtue itself. But this

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is not the notion of friendship; which is described to be, ‘ a peculiar relation, formed by a consent and harmony of minds*,’ as well as founded in virtue; from whence, it is an undeniable consequence, that it cannot be every man’s duty, since it evidently depends on circumstances, that are quite out of our power. There are innumerable instances, in which persons may find several among their acquaintance, and in the same sphere of life, whom they highly esteem; but not one, proper to be chosen for a close and intimate friend: So that the recommending private friendship, in the general, must have been very absurd; since it is only a rare and accidental obligation, and never falls in the way of a great part of mankind.

AND, besides, it might have been attended with extremely injurious effects. For the bulk of the world thinking it a duty of religion, and a necessary branch of sublime and heroic virtue, would enter into rash, unconcerted, and disagreeable alliances, which must naturally produce a great deal of disorder, and disturb the peace of societies. Whereas, while they act upon the principle of universal benevolence, no ill consequences can ensue; and, therefore, the inculcating this principle only, as an essential part of morality, and leaving private friendship to fall in as a branch of it, just as prudence, on a view of all circumstances, directs, is the wisest and best way of instructing mankind:

WE may add farther, to vindicate our Saviour’s conduct on this occasion, that there has been very little need, in any age, to put men upon cultivating particular friendships, and the love of their country; but rather to give a check, to these narrow limited affections, and correct the exorbitancies of them. Mankind have a natural inclination to both, and there is no fear of their

* *Characteristics,*

neglecting either, so far as it is truly generous and useful ; on the contrary, the only danger is, that they will be carried to so great a height, as to be prejudicial to the general good. The experience of our own times, and the histories of all ages, are an ample justification of the truth of this remark.

FRIENDSHIPS have been always frequent enough—But of what kind are they? Do they not spring from *humour* and *caprice*, from a harmony of *odd*, *whimsical*, and *unaccountable* tempers, from *singularity*, and *selfishness*? Or, are they built upon the solid foundations of *honour*, and *virtue*? In like manner, zeal for the interest of a particular country, is it not *universal*? But, then, is it truly *benevolent* and *public-spirited*? Far from it. It is, more commonly, an absurd and childish prejudice, that makes men extravagantly fond of themselves, above all other nations: It is a zeal, that makes an *idol* of our country, and is ready to sacrifice even the good of the whole species to it. There was no reason, then, that our Saviour should particularly inculcate these things, to which mankind have so *natural* a turn, and are so apt to indulge to *excess*. His great work was to rectify all disorders, and, in an especial manner, *the abuse of good principles*, and the extravagancies that arise from it: And this he has effectually done, by enforcing the obligations of universal goodness; which will *regulate* all inferior affections, without *destroying* them. For the observing this rule will lead to every instance, both of friendship and love of our country, that is really *amiable*, and *beneficial*; and discourage such only of either kind, as are *unmanly*, and *mischievous*. Let me observe,

THIRDLY, that there was a *particular reason*, from the circumstances of the world at that time, why the *Christian* religion should

should not directly and strongly recommend the love of our country. In general, it is not a thing necessary to be insisted on, because, as has been hinted above, it is included in the love of mankind; and what all are powerfully inclined to, by education, custom, their own particular interest, and the like: And it was much less to be expected at a juncture, when an affection for particular countries was a *general nuisance*, and triumphed over justice and humanity.

FOR, it is well known, that the *Jews* were so partially fond of their own nation, that they looked upon themselves, as the only favourites of heaven; which made them severe and rigid in their censures, and morose and unfociable to all who were not of their religion. And, undoubtedly, the notion, that seems, generally, to have prevailed amongst them, that the *Messiah* was to be their temporal prince, and extend his dominion over all the earth, would have put them on subduing and oppressing other countries, as soon as they imagined they had a favourable opportunity for it. They wanted nothing, but the power, to effect this vile and barbarous scheme, which their *selfishness* and *pride* suggested.—And as for the *Romans*, whose noble lectures of benevolence and generosity are so much boasted of, and the love of their country, represented as the very perfection of heroic virtue; the *Romans*, I say, were the *plagues* and *scourges* of mankind, and had actually carried their arms and conquests, and, together with them, terror, slavery, and ruin, through the greatest part of the then known world.

WAS this now a time to recommend narrow views, and an attachment to particular societies, when the *general interest* had suffered so much by it? It was rather the way, to have destroy-

ed *public benevolence* altogether. The proper lesson to be inculcated, in such a confused and degenerate state of things, was certainly *universal goodness*; in order to put a stop to the progress of ambition, avarice, and luxury, which had introduced such dreadful desolation, and subverted liberty, justice, and all social virtues: This, indeed, was the only remedy, that could be applied to the prevailing disorders. So that our Saviour's scheme of benevolence, is not only, in itself, the noblest and most God-like that we can conceive of; but in keeping to fundamental and general principles, and not descending to lower considerations, he acted the part of a *wise reformer*—a friend to the *universal happiness*—and an enemy to *oppression* and *tyranny*. Suffer me to add,

IN the LAST place, that though the *Christian* religion, has not particularly enjoined private friendship, and the love of our country, because, so far as they have any thing virtuous and commendable in them, they fall in, necessarily, with the regular pursuit of the general good; and because it was needless in itself, this being the constant bent of human nature; and, finally, because it is always more proper to restrain the excesses of these principles, than to allow them scope and latitude; and was so, particularly, at the time of our Saviour's appearance; though, I say, for these very sufficient and weighty reasons, they are not expressly enjoined by the *Christian* institution: Yet it is a *false insinuation*, that it has given no encouragement to them. For we have, in the character of *Christ* himself, an eminent example of each of these virtues, which is equally binding, as an express law, upon all who acknowledge his authority. He chose but twelve persons, to be his immediate and constant followers, and one of them he made his *friend*. Accordingly we read, in the histo-

ry of the New Testament, of *the disciple whom Jesus loved**; whom he always treated with confidence, and particular marks of tenderness and affection. And here was a friendship, that sprang from *virtue*; from a consent and harmony of the most *benevolent, mild, and amiable* dispositions; it was entirely *rational, disinterested, generous, and faithful*; subservient to the *universal good*, being founded in the love of goodness itself; and, consequently, a perfect pattern for our imitation.

AND was not his *weeping over Jerusalem*, from a sense of its impending ruin, a noble proof of his ardent concern for the *public welfare*? Were not all his labours to make his *country* happy, by reforming its corruptions and vices? Was it not for this, that he suffered so many abuses? Nay, did he not *even die* for the good of his country? I may add, to this, the example of *St. Paul*, who was so transported by his affection for his countrymen, as to wish, that the greatest of evils might befall himself, even *to be accursed from Christ* †, if, by that means, he might be the instrument of preserving and establishing their prosperity.

THESE are instances, than which, if we take in all circumstances, none ever were, or can be, more great and heroic; and had they been found, among the old *Greeks, or Romans*, they would have been celebrated with the most laboured and magnificent encomiums. But when men set themselves to magnify the powers of reason, and run down revelation, every thing, in the latter, has a *low and invidious* turn given to it; the most God-like virtues lose their lustre; and the most exalted scheme of morality is debased and vilified: As, in the case we have been considering, *Christianity* has been represented as being defective, for what is its chief

* John xix. 20.

† Rom. ix. 3.

excellence, and renders it vastly preferable to any system of moral philosophy, or any institution of religion, that ever appeared in the world.

I MAY add (to all that has been already offered) with the greatest propriety, that, in the point of *the love of our country*, the *whole* doctrine of revelation is perfectly consistent with *itself*, and consonant to *reason*. For, under the *Jewish* dispensation, *David* has given a noble proof, and specimen, of it, in the following lively, and affecting, passage.—*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: They shall prosper, that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren, and companions sakes, I will now say, peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our GOD, I will seek thy good**. The motives, suggested in these words, to this sublime branch of *social* virtue, are various, but completely *rational*; and may be so disposed, and ranged, in our consideration of them, as to rise, in a natural order, one *above* another.

IN the FIRST place, the love of our country may be *properly* cultivated from this topic; ‘that our own *private happiness* will be most effectually secured, by a steady attachment to the *general* interest, and using our utmost endeavours to advance it.’
—*They shall prosper, that love thee.*

AGAIN, ‘we are strongly prompted, by the ties of *natural affection*, and all the obligations and endearments of private *friendship*, to be incessantly *studious* of our country’s good; in which the welfare of those, for whom we are most nearly, and

* Psal. cxxii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

justly, concerned, is necessarily involved.' If we are *indifferent*, what becomes of *parents, children, friends*; of those, who are the more *immediate objects* of our kind and gracious dispositions; we must have thrown off *humanity*. For *nature* itself teaches us, to abhor, and brand with peculiar infamy, such barbarous *insensibility*, and *savageness*, of temper. We may, therefore, justly say, with respect to our *country*, and yet deserve to be ranked, among its most sincere and generous *friends*—For our *brethren, and companions, sakes*, we will now, and always, say, *peace be within thee*.

BUT the most *noble* and *generous* motives, to the love of our country, are still behind. And they are 'a concern for *universal equity*, for *universal liberty*, for *public order*, and *harmony*, for the preservation, and security, of the *natural*, and *civil, rights* of mankind; and a concern for the maintenance of *true religion*, in its original uncorrupted simplicity, as the surest *prop* of all regular government, and the most effectual *guard*, and *enforcement*, of the social virtues; and for the immunities of *conscience*, which are *sacred, unalienable, and equal*, in all'—That we may not be *deprived* of the inestimable privilege, of a free *examination*, and *choice*, of our religion; nor *oppressed*, in any degree, for not complying with the *state-religion*; nor have our understandings *awed*, and *enslaved*, by the terrors of *human authority*: Which is the vilest *indignity*, that can be offered to human nature, and the lowest *depression* of its intellectual, and moral, capacities; and to an ingenuous mind, which is conscious of its *native* freedom, and dignity, much more grievous than *death* itself. Both these *sublime* motives are distinctly suggested, by the *Psalmist*, as the *ground* of his pious and earnest prayer, *for the peace of Jerusalem*. For *there*, says he, *are, the thrones of judgment*; and, again

again—*Because of the house, of the LORD our GOD, I will seek thy good**.

LET us then be persuaded to cultivate, to the utmost, disinterested and univereal benevolence: For what is the perfection of our religion must, also, be the rectitude and honour of our nature. Let our constant aim be, the good of mankind. Let us enlarge our minds, daily, from little narrow prejudices; that all our private pleasures, our friendships, our regards to our country, may be regulated with a view to this, as their ultimate end. Nay, if it were possible, we should extend our thoughts beyond our own species, and take in the *universe of rational beings*: For the more unbounded scope we give, to our generous benevolence and compassion, the more truly noble it is: and the more nearly do we resemble the supreme fountain of goodness, whose *tender mercies are over all his works* †.

BUT I cannot yet entirely dismiss this subject; allow me, therefore, to add, that though the exercise of *mutual, and univereal, benevolence* is an essential, and unalterable, branch of *moral duty*, evidently founded in *nature*, and to which, we are strongly, and constantly, *incited* (till nature is perverted from its *first bias*), by some of the *warmest* propensions, and tendencies, in our composition: Yet mankind have found out various *excuses*, for *suspending* the natural sense of humanity, for *extirpating* good-nature, or, at least, *controuling* the benevolent friendly disposition, and *confining* it to a few favourite objects; substituting, in the room of it, with respect to *others*, moroseness, and cruelty. And nothing has contributed more, towards this

* Pſal. cxxii.

† Pſal. cxlv. 9.

melancholy effect, than their considering themselves, in the narrow view, of members of a particular society, governed by the same political laws, and distinguished by the peculiarities of their language, dress, and outward manners; and as the inhabitants of the same country, more immediately combined, for mutual defence; instead of extending their ideas, and looking on all mankind, as one great society, between whom, by the laws of GOD and nature, there is an intimate, and inseparable, communion of interests. Thus, their attachment, to a part, lessens their concern for the good of the whole.

AND this generally springs, from one, or other, of these two causes——either ‘from a national pride, from which, arises a contempt of others; or, a competition of interests, which begets aversion, and hatred.’

‘As for the high value, that men, of almost every nation, are apt to set upon themselves, above the inhabitants of other countries, it is, in a great measure, chimerical; the effect of vanity, and partiality.’ In most cases, they arrogate to themselves advantages, which they cannot justly claim; or, else, being strongly prepossessed, in favour of their own dispositions, and manners, chiefly, because they are their own, and when, perhaps, they are liable to many reasonable objections, they necessarily dislike the contrary dispositions, and manners, in other nations.

BUT, not to insist on this, let it be allowed, ‘that we really enjoy all the superiority, which we fondly imagine ourselves to be possessed of,’ even this will not afford the least excuse, for treating the rest of our fellow-creatures, with indifference, or neglect, and thinking them unworthy our compassion, and charitable assistance :

fistance: And to make this plain, beyond all dispute, I need only mention particular instances.

‘Do we, then, *despise* others, because we live in a more *temperate* and *healthy* air, or climate, or are, as a nation, more *populous*, *rich*, and *powerful*? This, if true, is the most *childish* of all prejudices.’ For we may, with equal justice, behave *inhumanely*, and *insolently*, towards our neighbours, on account of difference of *complexion*, *features*, or *habit of body*: And, thus, the offices of *mutual benevolence* (without which, all the *pleasures* of human life must be destroyed, nay, even the *world*, of *rational* beings, cannot long *subsist*,) will be made to depend entirely on *accidents*, and *trivial* circumstances, that are of no significance, in adjusting the natural *rights* of men, or fixing their *characters*, as *worthy*, or *unworthy*, of our regard.

AGAIN, ‘do we, as a nation, *treat* others *contemptuously*, because we esteem them *rude*, and *ignorant*; and look upon ourselves as a much more *wise*, and *ingenious*, people, more *polished*, and *refined*, with respect to the arts and embellishments of life?’ On the same foundation (since truth, and right conduct, are invariably the *same*, in *all climates*) the *wise*, in every country, may *despise* the ignorant amongst *their own country-men*, and refuse to condescend, to *assist* them in their distresses, or *relieve* their necessities. So that, upon this scheme, *an improved understanding* is absolutely necessary, to *intitle* a man to the common offices of *civility*, and *friendship*; and the *uncultivated*, *unthinking*, multitude deserve no better, than to be *abandoned* to want, and misery. ‘Whereas the *wisest* man, upon earth, can have no *excuse*, from his *character* for *superior* wisdom (which, on the contrary, will render every instance of *cruelty*, in him, more
monstrous,

monstrous, and *aggravated*) he can, I say, have no *excuse*, from his *character* for wisdom, to deny *mercy* to a *brute* creature: And shall, then, this poor *plea* screen him from *reproach*, can it in the least, *palliate* his inhumanity, if he *relents* not at the sufferings of one of his *own species*; who has a nature, of the *same* inherent *dignity*, with himself; and capable, though for the present it be *disguised* and *disfigured*, of considerable *intellectual* and *moral* improvements; and of shining with some degrees, even of a *God-like* lustre?

OR, if we are convinced, that, as a *nation*, we ought not to despise those, who are less *happy*, with respect either to *natural advantages*, or, *refinements* in knowledge, and civility——‘ can we think it at all more reasonable, to treat them with *scorn* and *insolence*, because we are a *free* people; whose properties, and just rights, are secured to us by wise laws, and under a mild and equal government; while they are debased into the condition of *slaves*, and oppressed, harrassed, and plundered by an *arbitrary* and *tyrannical* power? This, indeed, proves, that we are in a much more *agreeable* and *honourable* situation; but can give us no right to *insult* the *unfortunate*: On the contrary, they are the most *natural*, and *proper*, objects of our compassion. Having so many *inconveniences*, and *hardships*, to conflict with, and the *strength* of their minds enfeebled, and broken, by the oppressions they labour under, our *generosity* should the rather incline us, when such objects present themselves, to *soften* and *alleviate* their cares, and *raise* their drooping spirits: And it must argue a *savage* and *brutal* disposition, to sink them down *lower*, by our contempt, or cruelty. We may, with altogether as much reason, esteem our fellow-creatures *unworthy* of our respect, and assistance, for any *unavoidable defects* of body, or mind, whether *na-*

tural, or *accidental*: ‘And, thus, *charity* will be, in a great measure, banished the world; and those, whose *melancholy* circumstances loudly *demand* the exercise of our *benevolence*, will, for no other cause, but because they *want it most*, be *deprived* of it; and what is the most *powerful*, and *engaging*, *motive* to compassion, will, both against the dictates of nature, and the rules of religion, be used as an *argument* to *extirpate* all sense of compassion, and abandon the *miserable* to *despair*.’

THUS it appears, that *national pride*, though supported by the most plausible pretences, will not justify our expressing contempt, or a cruel indifference, towards the rest of mankind: The next thing, to be considered, is, ‘whether it will not be better defended, by a *competition* of *interests*.’

BUT this will soon appear to be an excuse, equally *absurd*, and *frivolous*. For, upon the very same foundation, all *private persons*, whose interests happen to *clash* and *interfere*, must be equally *excused* even in the *same community*, from performing acts of beneficence to each other. ‘And as this is *really* the case, in innumerable instances, and will be *thought* to be the case, in infinitely more, by *suspicious* and *sordid* tempers; the consequence, upon the whole, must be this, that there can *remain* scarce any exercise of charity at all: And, from our thinking ourselves not obliged to *do good* to others, the *transition* will be too easy to *fraud*, *oppression*, and a general *malevolence*.’

THE *true* state of the case is this—The first and great bond of *union*, amongst mankind, is their *common nature* and *wants*, their mutual *relation* to, and *dependence* on, each other. This being (and having been in all ages) the fixed and invariable

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constitution, makes the laws of *benevolence* of *universal*, and *eternal*, obligation. No *voluntary* combinations, engagements, or alliances, can *alter* this *original* disposition, this *established* course, and order, of things. If they *do*, they are against *nature*, against the *authority*, and *will*, of the GOD of nature, and the manifest *design* of our creation. The *reason*, why men form themselves into *nations*, 'ought *not* to be, because they have *particular interests*, *distinct* from, and much less *opposite* to, the *universal good*:' For, when the *views*, of the most *politic* and *flourishing* societies, are inconsistent with the happiness of the *rest* of their fellow creatures, they are what humanity, and religion, *disclaim*. Every nation, therefore, should consider itself as a society, or nation, of *men*; *each* of the *members* of which is obliged, in his *personal* character, to exercise all that *honour*, *justice*, *candour*, and *compassion*, towards one of *another country* (however *remote* from, or *disagreeable* to, *his own*) which are *due* to him, as a *man*, by an essential and unalienable *right*. Otherwise, our *social engagements* transform us into quite *different* beings, from what GOD *made* us, and give us inclinations, and prospects, quite *opposite* to those, with which *he*, *originally*, endued us.

BESIDES, what *rule* can we fix, for regulating the *extent* of our benevolence, more *perfect*, than that of the goodness of the common Creator? Or whom can we *imitate*, with more *honour*, or rational *satisfaction*, than the great pattern of supreme and spotless rectitude? Now his munificence and bounty are *diffused* through the *whole world*; throughout *all nations*, however *differing*, from each other, in their *laws*, and *customs*; however *unpolite*, and *barbarous*, and *ignorant* of the *true religion*. 'Surely, then, out of regard to his *example*, as well as to the obligations of common *humanity*, we must look upon the *whole*

human race, as *entitled* to some degrees of *respect*, and *affection*; and *condemn* all such *national prejudices*, all such *attachments* to *particular* communities (however *excelling* in their several policies, and constitutions of government) as *oppose*, or *controul*, that more open, expanded, and generous disposition of benevolence, which directs to the pursuit of the *universal good*.'

'EQUALLY *inconsistent* is it, with all the great rules of benevolence and goodness, to make the most *important differences*, with respect to *religion*, an excuse, for *suspending* any of the mutual offices of *kindness*, that are *due* from one man to another.' Let four inflexible *bigots* seriously consider this, who put on *morose* and *sullen* airs, in *conversing* with those, who are of a different *persuasion* from themselves, even in *abstruse* and *intricate* controversies; and let them *blush* at their conduct, which is fo repugnant to all the principles of humanity.

BUT the most notorious violations of the laws of nature, and *Christianity*, seldom want advocates to appear in their defence, when *religion* is concerned.—And, therefore, it is pleaded, 'that *zeal*, for the *honour* of GOD, require us to shew a sharp resentment, against such *impious notions*, as either subvert the the *truth* of religion, or corrupt its native *simplicity*.' In answer to which, I would ask, 'what is it, that the *honour* of GOD does, in reality, *demand* from us? Not, surely, that we support his *authority*, by a breach of his most sacred *laws*; not, that we *debase* his *image*, in *ourselves*, by rooting out of our minds all sentiments of *generosity* and *mercy*, and by *persecuting* it, with scorn and cruelty, in *others*; not, that we *plead* the cause of *religion*, by *renouncing* its most amiable and important *principles* —But

—But only, that by our *moderation*, and *equity*, and *mild condescending* behaviour, joined with the *force* of clear and solid argument, we *convince gain-sayers*, and bring those, *that oppose themselves, to the acknowledgment of the truth* *.

FOR *unbelief*, and *error*, when we have good reason to suppose, that they spring from *unfairness*, and *disingenuity*, of temper, and lead to *impiety*, and *vice*, are *misfortunes*, which deserve our *pity*, and which it is extremely barbarous to *insult*. They ought not to be *aggravated*, by the *inhumanity* of men, and their refusing, such *unhappy* persons, any share in their *compassion*; since the abovementioned are crimes, *cognisable* only at GOD's tribunal, and will receive their due reward, *hereafter*, from the impartial judge of all. Add to this, that such a *severe* conduct is no *credit* to religion itself, but gives a very *unamiable*, and *shocking*, notion of it; as if it laid more stress on *believing* right, and having the *same apprehensions* with respect to the *doctrines* of religion, than on that *rectitude* of heart, and that exact uninterrupted course of *benevolence*, which are *divine* dispositions, and which, it must be the *end*, of all true piety, to promote. Nor is this the way to reclaim the erroneous, whose prejudices must be handled *gently*, for fear of *inflaming*, and *hardening*, their minds; the natural consequences, of a *harsh contemptuous* treatment, being always found to be, the making them more *inattentive* to reason, and rendering their prejudices more *incurable*.

NAY, I will venture to put two cases—The one, 'of persons, who *believe* all the *doctrines* of *revelation*, and are animated by an uncommon *ardour* to *propagate* the good cause, they have

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

espoused; to such a degree, that, with the *Pharisee*, they compass sea and land to make *profelytes* *; but, notwithstanding their accurate faith, have no bowels of mercies, no kindness, and humbleness of mind, no meekness, and long-suffering †——The other of such, as are unsatisfied about the truth of these important principles of religion, and, yet, make conscience of exercising *humanity*, and the *social virtues*’——Upon comparing both these characters together, the mind of man will, I think, naturally come to this determination, that the latter, though it be more defective in the *theory*, yet being more perfect in the *practice*, of religion (which is the excellent part) must, of course, be more *amiable* in itself, and *acceptable* to God. For to represent *religion*, as subversive of justice and charity, is making it *as bad*, as any scheme of mere *speculative impiety*, that the *weakness*, or *wickedness*, of mankind can invent. ‘The duties of *religion* are the duties of *men*; and must, therefore, be consistent with the *whole* duty, with the *natural* duty, that one man owes to another.’

* Mat. xxiii. 15.

† Col. iii. 12.

C H A P. XIII.

Of Unity, and Peace.

TH E R E are some duties, of that *self-evident* certainty and importance, that a person, who considers them in an abstracted view, would be apt to think a *particular illustration* and *enforcement* of them to be, in a great measure, needless: And, yet, the experience of all times assures us, that to *these*, the *attention* of mankind is most difficult to be fixed; and that *in cases*, where our duty is plain and unquestionable, and of universal moment and concern, *ill-humour*, and *pride* generally make the strongest *opposition*; and the *influence* of irregular habits, and licentious passions, is both more *perverse* and *incorrigible* in it-self, and *malignant* in its effects. The reason of which, I apprehend, is clearly this—that the highest obligations of reasonable creatures, *i. e.* the obligations to piety, to universal benevolence, and the social virtues, are most *pure* and *disinterested*; they require a temper weaned, and alienated, from the desire of a *contracted partial good*; and consequently, they directly contradict the most prevailing, *wrong, biasses* of human nature.

I HAVE already proved, in the first chapter of my discourses on social morality, that the *relative* situation, and character, of man are plainly and distinctly expressed, in his very *constitution*: His daily, and various, *wants* loudly proclaim it: He finds, in
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himself, insuppressible *instincts*, that force him to acknowledge it : So that here, there is not so much need of *convincing* his understanding, as of *exciting* him to reflection. For let him but open his eyes, and look around him calmly, and he will find, that *variance* and *contrariety*, in *moral* and *social* bodies, is, even to sense and common observation, disagreeable and monstrous ; like *ill-proportioned* parts, *jarring* principles, and uselefs *excrescencies*, in the *natural* body : While *mutual agreement*, and *harmonious operation*, must be allowed to have a delightful and beneficial aspect. *David*, therefore, has beautifully represented it as a thing both *obvious*, and *remarkable* ; highly worthy our regard, and yet, with all, so easily discerned, that without the help of abstruse reasoning, and if we consult experience alone, we must see it, and, be struck and impressed with a *lively notion* of it. *Behold*, says he, *how good, and how pleasant* it is, *for brethren to dwell together in unity* * !

THIS is illustrated, in the subsequent part of the *Psalms*, by two very expressive and elegant similitudes. *First*, it is compared to *the precious ointment*, appointed to be used in consecrating the *high-priest* ; which, by the prescription of the law of *Moses*, was to be composed of *several rich species*, that, by being rightly *tempered* and *mixed* together, yielded a most *fragrant odour*. It is equally delightful to the *moral sense*, to find among *brethren*, of *various capacities*, tempers, and conditions, strict friendship and an indissoluble union. And to describe, besides the *pleasures* resulting from it, its *use* and *salutary influence*, it is compared, farther, to the *dew* of heaven, which *refreshes* and *fructifies* dry and parched mountains ; to the *dew* of Hermon, and the dew that

* Psal. cxxxiii. 1.

descended upon the mountains of Sion * : Which *mountains*, being at a considerable *distance* from each other, the similitude might be intended to signify the *extensive* benefits, that are derived from an *union* of hearts and counsels ; from a mutual, uninterrupted, *intercourse* of kind and condescending offices ; which will be felt by *all ranks* of men, who are joined together in *society*. To which we may add, that it diffuses one *common spirit*, of harmony, strength, and vigour, through *different societies* ; through the *whole collective body* of mankind ; and the *universal church* of GOD. And as the passage of the *Psalmist* first cited, and thus illustrated by himself, directs to a most natural and comprehensive method, of treating farther on this subject ; I shall for the most part, in what remains, follow the order therein suggested.

BUT, surely, I need not attempt to prove, that we are not to understand the term *brethren*, in its most strict and confined signification ; because, though that sense must be included, yet it is evident, that the word itself has a more large and capacious meaning. *All mankind* may be justly denominated *brethren*, as they are the *off-spring* of GOD †. And this notion of *brotherhood*, which is the first and great bond of union, is plainly inculcated in the holy Scriptures, and allowed, and argued from, by the best moral writers. Again, the *members* of the same *civil community* are likewise, in a figurative and allusive sense, fitly stiled *brethren* : And, upon a similar ground of reason, the *professors* of the *same religion* ; because they are united together, in one concern and interest. Each of these corresponds, in several views, with the idea of *a family* raised and enlarged : We therefore find, that all the subjects of GOD'S moral kingdom,

* Psal. cxxxiii. 2, 3.

† Acts xvii. 29.

comprehended under the spiritual administration and government of *Christ*, are called, by *St. Paul*, *the whole family, in heaven, and earth* *; and the entire race of mankind may, with equal propriety, be represented as *the family of God*.

I SHALL therefore, in my following discourse, consider the character of *brethren*, and, consequently, the *unity*, which it is now my intention to recommend, in the *utmost latitude* it is capable of; because, the more universally this *excellent temper* prevails, *virtue*, and *order*, and *happiness*, will be, in proportion, more universal. The beauty and usefulness of it arise, in a great measure, from its being *extended*; from its *exceeding the bounds* of particular nations, and religious professions, and not being reduced within a *narrower limit*, than that of the whole species. However, I shall not omit to direct the application, of this general reasoning, to *peculiar* and *subordinate* instances; and, especially, to the case of *religious unity*; to which, in the opinion of some very celebrated and judicious interpreters, the words of the *Psalmist*, above-cited, have a more *immediate* reference. And, now, having briefly fixed the extent of it, and shewn who the persons are, among whom, it ought always to be cultivated: I shall,

NEXT, enquire into the *nature of the unity*, which both reason and religion recommend. This is a fundamental, and most important, question. For unless we can settle clearly, wherein *this unity* consists, it must be impossible for us to determine, whether it be either *amiable*, or *beneficial*: Since it is most certain, that we can *believe*, and *affirm*, nothing of that, of which we *know*

* Eph. iii. 15.

nothing; and while our *notions* are dark, uncertain, and confused, we can only *speak* with darkness, confusion, and uncertainty.

ALL mankind, indeed, seem to be agreed, that *some kind of unity* is absolutely necessary, but they have, for the most part, understood it *wrong*; and have, therefore, proposed *impossible* and *romantic* schemes, which can never take place; and their very zeal, for *unity*, has occasioned infinite and incurable *divisions*. And thus it must ever happen, to the disturbance of the *peace* of societies, *civil* and *religious*, unless we aim at an *unity* that is *possible*, and *natural*.

Now this, in the FIRST place, cannot be *unity of belief*, and *speculative opinion*: Because men's understandings, their opportunities for enquiry, their means of knowledge, are vastly *different*; and, while *these differences* continue (as they doubtless will, being a part of the original constitution of things, to the end of the world) it is absurd to expect, that their apprehensions will be exactly the *same*. This kind of *unity* is *above* the present state, and circumstances, of human nature. *Tyrants* may attempt to *force* it; the *crafty* and *ambitious* may eagerly contend for it, to serve their secret purposes; and the *bigot*, from self conceit, and narrowness of mind: But the thing itself can *never subsist*, unless the condition of men be entirely changed, and their nature new-modelled. Their faculties must be raised, to the *same degree* of strength and clearness, and their helps and advantages must likewise be *equal*, before it can be supposed, that their sentiments will perfectly, and constantly, *correspond*, even in points of moment and importance. Or, however, there is but *one possible way*, by which such an *unnatural union* can be introduced;

duced ; and that is, by the blind unthinking compliance, and implicit stupidity, of the generality of mankind.

BUT if this be admitted as true, *viz.* that *unity of opinion* is a thing never likely to happen, from the *frame* of human nature ; may we not *accord* in *one outward profession*, and agree to maintain in all matters of consequence, for the sake of regularity and peace, an *harmony of sounds*, though our *inward sense* be different ? It is certain, that men *may* consent to this ; but what *valuable end* will it answer ? Is such an unity as this *desirable*, that can only be supported by bare-faced hypocrisy, that exchanges real religion for formality, and has a direct tendency to banish virtue out of the world, and destroy the first foundations of mutual faith, and confidence ? Can that be a *pleasing* unity, which disfigures human nature, and represents it, to outward appearance, quite opposite to what it is in itself ? Can it be an *agreeable* thing, always to wear a mask, and be obliged to conceal the true sentiments of our hearts ? Or, can such an unity as this deserve to be stiled *good*, which must effectually prevent the propagation of truth, and all those improvements and discoveries, which we are capable of communicating one to another ; which can only serve to transmit ignorance and darkness, perpetual and inviolable, to all succeeding generations ?

As the whole of this is neither *religion*, nor common sense, but substituting a mere *name* and *pretence* of order, in the room of that *natural order*, which almighty GOD has established ; *peace* and *harmony*, so far as they are worthy our care, and contribute to the purposes of virtue, and the good of mankind, may unquestionably be *preserved* without it. To *agree in opinion*
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is entirely out of *our power*; to *profess alike*, whilst we believe differently, is *base*, and *dishonest*, and *destructive* of the most sacred obligations, and, upon that account, ought never to be the matter of our *choice*——So that neither of these can be any part of that *unity*, which we are bound to cultivate, as a religious and moral duty: But the whole sum of it must be resolved into this; ‘that condescension, mutual forbearance, and an harmony of mild benevolent affections, *supply the place* of that *uniformity* of faith and profession, which are, morally speaking, *impossible*.’

AND to recommend this generous sentiment, as most suitable to the natural relations, in which mankind stand to each other, it needs only to be considered, that brotherhood, and amity; brotherhood, and cordial friendship; brotherhood, and community of interest; brotherhood, and an indulgent candid temper, are very nearly *co-incident* ideas; because, in the nature of things, they neither *are*, nor *can be*, separated. When, therefore, all *mankind*, when all *Christians*, *love as brethren*, they support their respective characters with *propriety*, and *honour*. But when, about matters of *remote* concern, in which their *general relation* is not at all interested, they pursue opposite views, with estranged and alienated affections, *hateful*, and *hating one another*: This *shocks* our very *first* reflections, as a scandal to human nature, and infinitely disgraceful to all religion. On the contrary, as, in the *natural world*, it strikes us with an agreeable surprize and pleasure, to see the *various effects*, of divine wisdom and omnipotence, *connected* in their use, and *conspiring* jointly to one grand design, by the influence and force of *necessary* laws; it must appear, at least, equally beautiful, to find the *vastly different* humours, characters, and particular interests of *moral agents*,
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voluntarily directed to the universal good. When a sedate and undisturbed *union*, and *harmony*, are established in the best and noblest part of the creation, this is an object, that every wise and good man must, one would think, survey with a *sensible* and *strong complacency*; and GOD himself with *approbation*, and *calm delight*. No *true pleasure*, indeed, can be reasonably expected to result from any *alliances* and *confederacies*, however harmonious and strictly maintained, in *fraud* and *iniquity*. The very *end* proposed, in all associations of this kind, is *vile* and *detestable*; and therefore the closer the *union* is, the greater is the *guilt*; as it can only tend to render villainy more successful and triumphant. So that *reflection* must mar all our satisfaction *here*, which the *want* of it, *alone*, can supply.

BUT, with respect to the proper and natural *unity* of *men*, and *Christians* (which is founded on immutable principles of reason, and calculated for advancing universal order and happiness) the case is entirely *different*. This cannot possibly be maintained with consistency, and in its due extent, but upon *such principles* only, as are, likewise, the direct principles of *inward happiness*. It supposes, in the *first* place, pride and obstinacy, ambition and avarice, peevishness and malice, to be *controuled* and *subdued*; and the inward temper reduced, to a calm state of *ease* and *tranquility*. But this is not all: For *unity* can no where subsist, unless friendliness, love, generosity, and a delight in the good of others, are the *actuating* and *ruling* dispositions; which opens such a scene of exalted and unsatiating *pleasure*, that all the other gratifications, which the whole universe can afford, will not equal. Besides, *our joy* is the greater, because the advantages and blessings of mutual benevolence, and concord, are *widely diffused*: *We* are happy, in seeing our *fellow-creatures*,
and

and *fellow-christians*, happy : And of this, a person of a thoroughly *humane* disposition, will have an *exquisite* and *quick feeling*. So that the *Psalmist*, in the passage above referred to, might well say; *behold, how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

AND as for the *goodness* of it, this, surely, can be as little disputed; because, as it has been shewn to be fit in itself, and agreeable to the established order of things, and the unchangeable relations of reasonable creatures, it must, of course, be *morally* good : And undeniably so, on this account likewise, that it is the only means to promote the happiness of *mankind* in *general*, and absolutely necessary to the regular support, and well-being, of *all societies*. Let us suppose discord and variance to prevail universally, how would the world subsist? Where could *social happiness* be found, if there was nothing but mutual jealousy, distrust, and emulation; each supplanting his neighbour, and providing a separate gratification for himself? In *families*, there can be nothing but *confusion*, while contention and discord reign. In *kingdoms*, faction, and the strife of parties, create public *distress* and *perplexity*. And, in the *church of Christ*, the *effects* of dissention and opposition, of rash excommunications, and causeless schisms, have been extremely *deplorable* : To the oppression of truth and right; the making *Christian* assemblies seminaries of bitterness and enmity; prostituting the adorable character, of the blessed Saviour of mankind, to the profane scoffs of *atheists*, and *libertines*; and, in a word, almost to the utter extinction of every thing, but the bare name of *Christianity*.

WHEN the professors, of this most holy and excellent religion, are imperious and domineering, and foment cruel and unnatural *divisions*, when they break the *one body* of *Christ*, and multiply it into little *cabals*, reviling, and disclaiming all relation to, each other; when they are *contentious*, and, without thinking of charity and moderation, engage in *violent disputes* about the *holiness* of days, and gestures, and garments, and crossings, or the *orthodoxy* of sounds, that have no determinate *meaning*, or the several ways of *explaining*, what is allowed to be *inexplicable*; and instead of humility, and peace, gentleness, and simplicity of manners, the real *characters* of corrupt and degenerate *Christians*, are haughtiness, impatience of contradiction, and an implacable stubborn spirit: The cause of *Christianity* is more dangerously *wounded*, by such excesses as these, than by all the wit, and arguments, of its most ingenious and subtle opposers—And, notwithstanding its truth and divinity, *Infidels* will load it with *contempt*; nor, indeed, can it be expected to *flourish*, and gain *Profelytes*, while it is thus *dishonoured*, and *betrayed*, by its pretended friends.

ADD to this, that *divisions*, and *animosities*, obstruct the increase of *Christian knowledge*, by infusing strong prejudices, by inflaming the passions, and darkening the understanding; and by withdrawing the attention from the essential doctrines of the *Gospel*, and fixing it on those minute and trifling points, which are, generally, the subjects of most furious and scandalous debates. No less fatal are they to the *Christian virtues* of righteousness, long-suffering, meekness, fidelity, and goodness; which are all obliterated and effaced, in proportion to the increase of *discord* and *variance*.

STRIFE and *faction* are therefore condemned, in the New Testament, in the severest Terms, because of their manifest *contrariety* to true religion, and the *Christian* character, and their dreadful and destructive *consequences*: And, on the contrary, the strictest *unity*, and most *affectionate regard* for each other, are frequently, and earnestly, recommended. We are exhorted, to *follow after the things which make for peace**; to *put away evil speaking, wrath, anger, clamour, malice*†. And the Apostle Paul, with the most beautiful and pathetic tenderness (which shewed the peculiar mildness and benevolence of his disposition) intreated the *Philippians*, if there was *any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the spirit, to be like-minded, having the same love* [i. e. *reciprocal and universal charity,*] being *of one accord, of one mind*§; and the *Colossians*, to *put on (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another*‡. He reprov'd the *Corinthians*, for their *contentious* principles, with great sharpness and severity, in the following passage: *Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas, or Peter; and I of Christ; are ye not carnal? Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or, were ye baptised into the name of Paul* ||? And, in another of his epistles, he enjoins it on the *Christian* brethren, to *walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith they were called*—Because there is *one body, and one spirit, even as they were called in one hope of*

* Rom. xiv. 19.

† Eph. iv. 31.

§ Philip. ii. 1, 2.

‡ Col. iii. 12, 13,

|| 1 Cor. i. 12, 13.

Chap. iii. 3, 4.

their calling ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism ; one GOD, and Father of all, who was above all, and through all, and in them all*.

THIS is the glorious spirit, this the divine temper, of the Christian religion, strongly inculcated, and brightly exemplified, by the first preachers of it. And if the time should ever come, when not only the members of particular churches, but whole Christian societies, shall live, in this amiable and blessed concord, one with another ; nay, when, by a more extensive benevolence and harmony than this, all mankind shall be united in the bonds of an undissolved and generous friendship ; not merely, upon the consideration of their dwelling together in neighbourhoods, and lesser societies, but as parts of the universal community : This will be the strongest and most transporting resemblance, of which we can, at present, form any idea of the future life ; in which social affections will be exerted, and social pleasures enjoyed, in their utmost purity and perfection. And as the introduction, the opening, and gradual establishment, of this refined state of things in this world, is an object so worthy our attention and pursuit : I shall lay down some directions, for the better preserving peace amongst individuals, with which public peace has, and must always have, a strict and necessary connection. And,

FIRST, it is absolutely necessary, that we mortify all those turbulent and irregular passions, and avoid all those vices, which have a tendency to destroy peace ; and are the immediate springs of strife, and variance. From whence, come wars and fightings among you (says St. James) come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members † ? From a restless and impetuous

* Eph. iv. 1, 4, 5, 6.

† Jam. iv. 1.

mind, a mind agitated, and inflamed, by disorderly and un-governed lusts, will naturally proceed *emulation* and *discord*.

BUT there are some passions, which have a more particular, and direct, tendency to produce these evils, which, therefore, we should be most of all careful to suppress. For instance, it is so obvious an effect of *pride*, that *Solomon* says, *only by pride, cometh contention* *. The proud man, having an extravagant opinion of his *own merit*, will look for *uncommon respect* from others; and think himself *slighted*, and *affronted*, upon the most innocent and trivial occasions: And hence, will arise *feuds*, and *contests*, about trifling punctilios of honour and ceremony, about rank and precedency; *real affronts*, in revenge for imaginary provocations; and, consequently, *quarrellings*, and the utmost degree of *mischief*.

AND as *pride* makes men set an extraordinary value upon themselves, it makes them, likewise, insolent, positive, and assuming; imperious, and domineering; and puts them on treating their fellow-creatures, with *contempt* and *disdain*. And as all or at least the greater part of, mankind *value* themselves *sufficiently*, and cannot *brook* being despised and degraded; or used as worthless insignificant persons; hence springs a *keen sense* of abuse and wrong, and, as the natural effect of it, *resentment* and *indignation* against the offender. And I believe, if we consult experience, we shall find, that as many, if not more, *differences* arise from this, than from any other, cause; which was also the case, in the more early ages of the world, according to *Solomon's* maxim—*Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out, yea, strife and reproach shall cease* †.

* Prov. xiii. 10.

† Ib. xxii. 10.

AN exorbitant *ambition*, after power and greatness, is also a very fruitful source of *discord*. All ages, and all histories, afford melancholy examples, how frequent *disturbances* have been upon this head, and what dreadful *confusions* it has caused in the world: What *convulsions* in government; what *desolations* in the most rich and flourishing countries; what a vast *effusion* of blood. And a desire of *prebeminence* and *superiority*, in *lesser* characters, will always occasion, *in proportion* to the sphere of activity, *equal* mischiefs, as in a more *exalted* and *extensive* capacity.

COVETOUSNESS, again, tends, naturally, to *embroil* mankind, and propagate *variance*, and *dissention*. For if persons are resolved to stick at no methods, in order to be rich, the consequence must be *fraud* and *circumvention*, *oppression* and *injury*; upon which, the passions being exasperated, the obligations of friendship cancelled, and all mutual confidence and good offices suspended, nothing can be expected, but that *open hostility* will ensue.

To these let me add, as another immediate source of *contention*, immoderate *anger*, which transports men, beyond all the bounds of that *decency* and *respect*, which they owe to each other; and leads not only to provoking and abusive *language*, but to the most outrageous *acts* of violence: By which the *peace* of families, and whole neighbourhoods, is destroyed, and exchanged for inveterate *malice* and *animosity*.

I SHALL only mention one vice more, from which the *differences* and *bitter dissentions*, which there are among mankind, do commonly proceed; and that is, *evil-speaking*: Under which head, I rank not only virulent and opprobrious discourse, and more
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open and malicious invectives, but the leffer methods of scandal, and defamation. He that *whispers* things *secretly*, to the difreputation and injury of his neighbour, that *insinuates* dark *fufpicions* of ill defigns, that *aggravates* his real faults, or *detracts* from the merit of his good aétions, may be juftly reckoned an *incendiary*; according to the wife obfervation of *Solomon*, That a *whisperer* *feperateth chief friends* *. He, likewise, may be looked upon as a *feeder* of the feeds of *discord*, who makes it his bufinefs to carry *idle ftories*, from one to another, of things faid to their prejudice; not, perhaps, from *malice*, or any direct *ill intention*, but only from the general humour of *talkativenefs* and *impertinence*, which fo much prevails in the world. And as it appears, that mankind, almoft univerfally, value their reputation fo highly, and have fo quick a *refentment* of every thing, that ftains and blackens their characters, that they cannot bear the fecret *whispers* of calumny, any more than *loud* and *open* defamation; this fhews us, how neceffary it is, in order to preferve the *peace* of the world, that we abftain from every thing of this kind, with the moft exact and fcrupulous care.

FOR when we fay any thing to the *difhonour* or *prejudice* of others, *derogatory* from their wifdom, virtue, or from any other good quality, which they lay a great ftrefs upon, or which, in the opinion of the world, is worthy and laudable; it matters not, whether the fubftance of what is related be *true*, or *false*; fince it is the *afferting* the thing (and not the *circumftances* of it) that gives fo much *difpleafure*, and raifes fo high a *refentment*. I would recommend it, therefore, as a rule very fit to be obferved by all, who ftudy their *own eafe* and *quiet*, or are defirous of *public harmony* and *concord*—to be cautious, how they meddle

* Prov. xvi. 28.

with any man's *character*, especially with the *weak* and *defective* part of it. Praise his *good* qualities to the utmost; and speak, if you please, of his *indifferent* actions; but take care, how you say any thing of him that is reflecting and dishonourable, even in *private*: For if it should be known (and there are a thousand circumstances, that may occasion such a discovery) it will probably offend and disgust him, and fix an ill impression of you in his mind; the consequence of which will be, that he will interpret, every part of your conduct, in the most rigorous and disadvantageous sense: And thus, by degrees, there may come to be an *avowed rupture*, and *implacable enmity*, between the most intimate and familiar friends.

To those, which have been already suggested, it will be proper for us to add this, as another necessary rule, *viz.* that we should abstain carefully from every thing, whereby our corrupt passions will be *inflamed*; and, particularly, from all *intemperate revellings*, and *excesses*: For, in the midst of these irregularities, men frequently give a loose to the most furious *contention*, and commit the greatest *violence* upon each other. This is very elegantly and strongly described, in the book of *Proverbs*—*Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause?—They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last, it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder* *.

ANOTHER rule to be observed, in order to promote and establish *peace*, is this, that we be affable and obliging to all, meek

* Prov. xxiii. 29, &c.

and condescending, prudent and circumspect in our conduct; and, particularly, that instead of expressing a dislike and scorn of any, we shew them rather more respect than they deserve, provided it be in such instances, as will not gratify and strengthen an ill principle of vanity, nor, consequently, vitiate and corrupt their minds. For all men, (as I have had occasion, more than once, to observe before) are, some way or other, persons of importance in their own thoughts; and you may, generally speaking, live *quietly* and *easily* with them, if you pay them a civil deference and regard: But if it appears, that they are the objects of your *contempt*, they will, in return, make you the objects of their *disdain* and *hatred* both.

AND as an *inoffensive* and *respectful* carriage is necessary, so is a *frank* and *open* behaviour. For if we are *close* and *reserved*, men of suspicious tempers will fancy, that we abuse and impose upon them, and entertain ill designs, and, consequently will view all our actions in the most unfavourable lights; and, being strongly *prejudiced*, will be apt to *quarrel* with us, upon every imaginary provocation. Again, it is oftentimes highly expedient, that we be *gentle* and *compliant* to the humours of others, and even to their weaknesses, and imperfections. For as there is an infinite variety, in the tempers, interests, and pursuits of men, should every one be *stiff* and *inflexible*, there must be eternal *variance*, and *alienation of affection*. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance, if we would keep up a *good correspondence* with our fellow-creatures, that we sometimes favour their *weak side*, overlook many of their *mistakes*, and put on that particular *good temper*, which is most likely to *agree* with their *bad one*: That in conversing, for instance, with such as are perverse and froward, we show ourselves more good-natured and obliging; to
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the angry and passionate, more calm and gentle ; to the positive and obstinate, more modest and flexible.

I WOULD recommend farther, to all the lovers of *peace*, not to be forward to engage in unnecessary *disputes*. There are some cases, in which disputes are not only *needless*, because they can answer no *good* purpose ; but have, evidently, a very *mischievous* and *hurtful* tendency. Thus, for example, it must be the utmost folly and imprudence, to enter into a dispute, with a man of a *hasty* and *choleric* disposition : For the passions, in such a one, being quick and violent, will take fire at the least *opposition*, and load the *opposer* himself with *scurrility* and *reproach*, instead of attempting to convince him, by *solid argument* : And this, perhaps, may *exasperate* his passions likewise ; and, by kindling *a flame*, that cannot easily be quenched, lay the foundation of *perpetual estrangement* and *injury*. Men, indeed, are so *warm* and *eager* in almost all their debates, that an *ill effect* may be, generally, apprehended. Nay, even in *disputes* about *religion*, it is melancholy to observe, what *bitterness* is too often discovered ; and how many, instead of manifesting a sincere and rational concern for the honour of religion, and the improvement of their own minds, evidence only this sad truth——that they cherish those *unruly passions*, which religion condemns, and are strangers to that *meekness* and *charity*, which is an essential and a most ornamental part of it.

AND the reason, of these angry and violent proceedings, is, that men *dispute* not for *truth*, but *victory* ; not to acquire *new knowledge*, but obstinately to maintain what they *have* already ; or, at least, what they *adhere to* under that character, whether, it be, in reality, *knowledge*, or *ignorance*.

NOT that I would be understood to discourage a calm and deliberate *enquiry*, and impartial *debate* about the principles of *religion*, or any other important points of knowledge: For I am persuaded, that if men were candid and moderate, and had a due command of themselves, these might answer very *valuable* ends. But, as they are generally managed, no wise man, who is *studious* of *peace*, will be forward to engage in them; especially, if they are about questions of mere subtilty, and dry speculation, which can be of no advantage towards the just regulation of life and manners. For, in such cases, a *victory* cannot be any *real improvement* of the *mind*, but only the *triumph* of a *superior understanding*: And when this is the point aimed at, the *contest* will probably be carried on (as about superior power, and greatness, or any other things, which are not moral, but mere natural and external, advantages) with great *heat* and *animosity*. St. *Paul*, therefore, informed *Timothy*, that the consequence of such altercations was, *envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings* *; and advised him to *avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing, that they gender strifes* †.

FARTHER, another method, by which the *beginnings* of *much contention* may be prevented, is, for men not to be *too meddling* and *over-officious*, not to be *inquisitive* about other peoples affairs, nor to *pry* into their secrets. For, by this conduct, they not only incur the censure of being *impertinent* and *pragmatical*, but, oftentimes, run themselves into *quarrels* with persons, who think that they are affronted, and injured, by such a behavi-

* 1 Tim. vi. 4.

† 2 Tim. ii. 23.

our: And, by being too forward to *interfere* in the management of their neighbours concerns, they render themselves, in some measure, *accountable* for any ill turn in their affairs, and for difficulties and embarrassments, which they may labour under.

BUT there is another kind of *officiousness*, perhaps the most foolish and dangerous of all, and that is, *concerning* ourselves; unnecessarily, with other mens *differences*. If, indeed, we were desired to interpose, and the parties, at variance, had an opinion of our wisdom and ability, to determine the points in debate, it might be an act of great *goodness* and *generosity*, to use our utmost endeavours for an *amicable accommodation*: But if we thrust ourselves into such scenes as these, without being invited, and, perhaps, without talents equal to the undertaking, we shall probably make *one*, if not *both*, of the parties our enemies. And therefore *Solomon*, who had a just knowledge, and great experience, of human nature, has very wisely observed: That *he that passeth by, and medleth with strife* belonging *not to him*, acts as absurd and mad apart, as *he that taketh a dog by the ears* *.

I SHALL only add one direction more, in order to crush *strife* and *contention* in its very birth, which is this, that we endeavour immediately to *reconcile* ourselves, to any who think, that we have *offended* and *done* them *wrong*; and that, whether their suspicions are just, or only imaginary. For a *sense* of *injury*, especially if it be ill-grounded, may easily be *removed*, at its *first en-*

* Prov. xxvi. 17.

trance into the mind ; whereas, if it be suffered to *fix itself*, it becomes as hard to be *rooted out*, as any other settled and inveterate prejudice. And if those, who have conceived ill impressions of us, are so *rugged* and *inflexible*, as not to be wrought upon by our mildness and ingenuity ; we may still take pleasure, in the review of our *calm* and *generous* behaviour ; and leave them to answer for all the *guilt* of the *contention*, and the bitter *animosities*, and *mischiefs*, that may attend it.

UNDER the conduct of these rules, it should be our endeavour (*if it be possible*) to *live peaceably with all men* *. Only, let it be constantly remembered, that though *peace* be, indeed, a word of a delightful sound, though it strikes agreeably, and has many charms and advantages, to *recommend* it to a wise man, and make him highly solicitous to *promote* it ; yet the rectitude of our minds, the favour of GOD, and the inward satisfactions and joys of a good conscience, are infinitely preferable to the *esteem* and *friendship* of men ; which ought, when there is a real necessity, to be *sacrificed* to such superior, and more weighty, considerations. In a word therefore, in pursuance of the excellent advice of the author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* : Let us be careful to *follow peace with all men* ; but, *ever*, with an inviolable and ultimate regard to that universal virtue, *and holiness, without which, no man shall see the Lord* †.

I SHALL conclude the whole with this one remark, that a peaceful disposition, and an inoffensive behaviour, in all *private* persons, will infallibly produce peace in *families* ; that peace,

* Rom. xii. 18

† Hebr. xii. 14.

in *families*, will naturally beget peace in *neighbourhoods*, and *larger districts*; that peace and unity, universally cultivated in *neighbourhoods*, directly tends to *political* and *civil* unity; and that the preserving amity and concord, in all *particular religious societies*, is the most effectual method, which it is in our power to take, to promote, and establish, peace and order, throughout the *universal church of Christ*.

C H A P. XIV.

Of Humility, and Meekness.

I SHALL begin, with giving a short account of the true nature of *humility*; from whence it will appear, what great influence it has, upon the whole of *social virtue*. And this is the more necessary, because it has been so widely *mistaken*, that this most excellent disposition, which is the foundation and support of all other virtues, has not only been of no service to the interests of *human society*, but of very *dangerous* consequence.

LET me observe therefore, in the FIRST place, that *humility* does not consist in thinking *worse* of ourselves, than we really deserve; nor is it *pride* in any man, to reckon himself a *good* and *virtuous* person, if he truly is so; or to *prefer* himself to others, whose lives are evidently wicked and immoral: For this is no more, than forming a *right* judgment of things—And if he makes it the matter of his thanksgiving to almighty GOD, under a modest sense of his imperfections, notwithstanding his *superiority* to many of his fellow-creatures, and without *insulting* their unhappy state; it is but a decent acknowledgment of the care of providence, which has the supreme direction, and overruling influence, in every event.

AND

AND yet, many seem to think, that it is of the *essence* of *humility*, to entertain the *meanest* and *vilest* opinion of themselves, they can possibly form; they set out with this false principle, that they cannot *degrade* themselves enough: And thus, they are not only deprived of that satisfaction and comfort, which are the natural reward of their integrity; but proceed so far, as to make it one principal part of the character of a *saint*, to think, and speak, such *ill things* of himself, as, if true, would infallibly prove him to be *in the very gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity**.

SUCH apprehensions, as these, must necessarily weaken all the ties of *moral goodness*, as, in their consequences, they plainly represent him to be the most *religious*, who is, in his true character, the *worst* of men; and suppose, that the *virtues* of *sociality*, instead of being necessary offices of true religion, are, both with respect to the inward disposition, and the outward act, things, that a *humble pious Christian* may be wholly destitute of: And they are attended with this additional ill consequence; that as men are, generally, apt to judge of others by themselves, they will naturally think the whole race of mankind, to whom their *social duties* are to be paid, to be a set of such *vile miscreants* as cannot, reasonably, be deemed worthy of their esteem and friendship.

AGAIN, another very mischievous and *unsocial* description of *humility* is, to make it consist in despising and vilifying *reason*, and in representing *religion* as not the matter of our deliberate

* Acts viii. 23.

conviction, and free choice : For this is, in effect, destroying all the boundaries of *right* and *wrong* ; and making the very notion of *virtue*, and *vice*, an absolute contradiction. The same may be said, of all those accounts of the duty of *humility*, which dishonour *human nature*, by representing it as a monstrous composition of *spleen*, *meannefs* of spirit, and of all other *base* and *un-generous* dispositions, which naturally tend to *oppose* the good of mankind ; and which, if it was the true state of the case, would furnish a plausible *excuse*, for the vices of the *sensual*, the *proud*, the *cruel*, from the necessary malignity, and depravation, of human nature : Of those accounts, likewise, which teach *Christian humility* to undervalue and disgrace *morality*, and, by necessary consequence, all the *social* virtues.—I do not pretend to assert, that with those who espouse, and zealously propagate, such principles as these, they have this *real effect*, *viz.* to prevent their being *meek*, and *beneficent*, and *true lovers* of mankind ; but only, that this is their direct and natural *tendency*, though it may be obstructed, in particular instances, by other accidental causes. Having thus guarded against some gross mistakes, and shewn, that the three last mentioned, no more belong to the duty of *humility*, than, I had proved before, they did to *Christian self-denial* ; I proceed to explain, more directly, wherein *true humility* consists ; and shall,

FIRST, consider it as an *inward principle*, as the *temper* and *habit* of the mind. In this view, it implies a general knowledge of human nature, and just apprehensions concerning it—That we are truly sensible of the *limitation* of its faculties, and the *imperfection* of its knowledge and goodness ; which will suppress *haughtiness* and *arrogance*, vices, that are highly detrimental to the *peace* and *order* of society. True humility teaches us, to
consider

consider ourselves as beings of a *mixed* make; compounded of understanding, and appetite, or, in other words, of an intelligent, and sensitive, nature: Who, with respect to the inferior part, are nearly *allied* to creatures *below* us, and whose intellectual capacities are *narrow* and *confined*: That we have many desires, which we cannot *satisfy*; are pressed with wants, which we cannot *relieve*; and *liable* to numberless cares, crosses, and disappointments. This is the real state of things: And therefore human nature, in the *general* consideration of it, can make but a *lowly* appearance in the eyes of humble and impartial minds, if compared with the *various orders* of *rational* beings, which may be conceived to be above it; but, especially, with the absolutely perfect *Creator* of all things. And these, surely, are sentiments, which must, in the strongest manner, enforce *every social virtue*: While the contrary dispositions of *pride*, and *high-mindedness*, tend utterly to efface the impressions of *modesty*, *justice*, and *humanity*.

BUT besides entertaining this lowly opinion of human nature in general, it is necessary, that we should think rightly of *ourselves*, as *individuals* in the species of mankind; and of *the rank* we bear, in human nature: For we plainly see, that it is not *equal* in all; but that, in different men, it is *more*, or *less*, perfect: So that if *all* were to judge of *themselves*, as they do of human nature in its highest advancement, they must judge contrary to *truth* and *right*; which are the ground of *humility*, as well as of every other *social* obligation. It is, therefore, indispensably necessary, in order to our maintaining a *humble* frame and temper of mind, that we form a *just estimate* of our several endowments; not *arrogating* any, that do not belong to us, nor *over-rating* those, which we may fairly

ly claim: That we be duly conscious of our *defects*, as well as modestly sensible of our *excellencies*: That we neither *magnify* our intellectual and moral qualifications; nor lay *too great a stress* on strength, or beauty, or any other bodily accomplishments; nor be puffed up to *high and extravagant conceits*, to *insolence*, or *contempt* of others, by riches and honours; which are advantages merely external and accidental. And the consequence of this correct and impartial idea, of the weakness of human nature in general, and of our own faculties in particular, will be a *teachable* disposition, ready to receive instruction, and follow the guidance of any clearer and fuller light, than we at present enjoy; and, as the effect of this, a constant *aspiring* after a more improved state of knowledge, and virtue.

And, finally, it is absolutely necessary to the attainment of true *humility*, that we *conform* our *temper* to our state and circumstances, and *confine* ourselves, as much as possible, within the compass of our *natural wants*, and *desires*; neither indulging to an unbounded avarice, and thirst for riches; nor to an exorbitant ambition after worldly distinction and grandeur. To this purpose, the words of *David* are very strong and pertinent, when he gives this description of his own character—*Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely, I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child**. And our Saviour has represented our duty to us, under the same emblem. For when his disciples warmly debated that question among themselves, *who* of them should be *the greatest*, in the temporal glo-

* Psalm cxxxix 1, 2.

rious kindom of the *Messiah*, and appealed to him for the determination of it—*He called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said; Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven* *.

THUS have I given a short description of the excellent virtue of *humility*, so far as it is an internal principle, and a law to the mind. And this inward temper, as it will necessarily inspire all that humble reverence and submission, which are so evidently due to the supreme authority, wisdom, and universal providence of GOD; will, as certainly, produce the strict and constant exercise of all the *offices of social virtue*, that are required in human life. Its direct, and almost necessary, tendency is to teach, and impress, a just *respect* to our *superiours*, and a becoming *acknowledgment* of that superiority, of whatever kind it be; whether it be a superiority of *wisdom, goodness, rank*, as this last is marked out to us, either by the more immediate order of nature, or the just establishments of civil society. It will as necessarily direct us to *pay the same regard* to our *equals*, as we *claim* from them, and to allow them all the *advantages*, that we ourselves can rationally desire; and instead of *assuming*, rather to wave our *pretensions*, and yield the outward shew of *superiority*, as a natural means to promote, and propagate, mutual benevolence and friendship. And upon the same general foundation in nature, and the reason of the thing, it must dictate, with respect to those in *lower stations* of life,

* Mat. xviii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

the utmost *gentleness*, *courtesy*, *condescension*, and *compassion*: Because *all* mankind belong to one class of beings; and because a superiour *genius*, and superiour *virtues*, may be covered under low and despicable appearances, which would perhaps have made a great figure, and have attracted the highest admiration and esteem, had they been drawn out of their *obscurity*.

HUMILITY, indeed, neither allows of *fawning*, and *flattery*, and a base servile *submission* to the will of superiours; nor does it encourage such indiscreet and familiar *condescensions*, to persons in an inferior state, as tend to bring us into contempt. On the contrary, it only supposes this plain truth, which the common understanding of mankind must readily admit; *viz.* that we can maintain all the necessary *decencies* of life, and the *deference* due to our particular characters, without *sternness* and *arrogance*, and a supercilious scornful treatment of any, whom providence, for wise reasons, has placed in a state of subordination, with respect to outward rank, and offices of life. Thus it appears, that *humility*, how properly soever it may be considered, as a *part* of the inward *discipline*, and *government*, of a man's self, is, likewise, inseparably connected with *social virtue*; both as a *basis*, on which it will be more firmly supported; and as, in many very important instances, it *regulates* its equal and just *proportions*.

BUT the excellency of *virtues* is, oftentimes, more strongly illustrated, by exposing the depravity, and pernicious consequences, of their *contrary vices*: I shall therefore enlarge my reflections farther on this subject, and consider *pride* in its manifest *contrariety* to human nature, regarded either as *rational*, *animal*, *moral*, or *social*. The subject, on which I am now briefly

to discourse, is most expressively stated by the son of *Syrach*, in this beautiful aphorism—*Pride was not made for men* *.

To begin with his *intellectual* capacities ; what foundation do these afford for *haughtiness* and vain *ostentation*? Why, scarce so much, as will give it even a plausible colour, or suggest the least tolerable excuse for it. For, though it must be owned indeed, that they are an eminent *prerogative*, and a distinguishing *excellence*, in human nature, when they are compared with the *mere instincts* of inferior creatures ; yet, in themselves, they yield the strongest arguments for *humility*.

FOR (to enlarge a little, on what I have before just mentioned in general) these *boasted* faculties of the human mind are, in the *first* place, very *narrow* and *limited*. The sensitive part confines their operation within a *little compass* ; and obstructs their clear and vigorous *exercise*. Innumerable objects lie quite out of their *reach* : And, of others, the reason of man discovers only the *outside* ; and, of consequence, can form no more than *general* and *imperfect* ideas. It is soon puzzled, and lost in darkness, for want of comprehending the *causes* of things : It is frequently embarrassed with *difficulties*, and *objections* against the plainest truths, which it cannot thoroughly remove : And having, in many useful branches of reasoning, but few *certain principles* to proceed upon, the conclusions, which it forms, are rather built on *presumption*, and probable *conjecture*, than on solid and indubitable proofs.

* *Ecclus.* x. 18.

AND yet, so weak and limited as our intellectual faculties are, they *open* but *slowly*: A considerable part of life is lost, before they are *fitted* to exert themselves to great advantage: And it is scarce ever, without a tender care and discreet management, and an exact and skilfull culture, that they are brought to *maturity*. The *natural capacity* may be *good*; but if it be not *furnished* with good principles, and *directed* to a right train of thinking, it will be very far from making any *eminent figure*. It is much more likely to be *lost* in error, or *depressed* by indolence; or, at best, to gather up, only, a few *loose, crude, undigested* notions; sufficient to produce, and cherish, vanity and self-conceit, but of very little significancy, towards enlightening the judgment, and enriching the mind with substantial and useful knowledge.

ADD to all this, that the knowledge which the mind of man is capable of, however, upon the whole, minute and superficial; confused and partial, is acquired by *laborious researches, close application, and a slow tedious progress*: Which, evidently, demonstrates the *low state* of our reason. And this reason, which is by nature so narrow and short-sighted, is unhappily more cramped and darkened, by a vast variety of *prejudices*; some of which *insensibly* mislead and pervert it. Prejudices of *education* enslave the understanding: Particular *affections, attachments, and interests*, give it a wrong bias: *False lights* dazzle it: And *error itself*, speciously represented, and dressed in artificial delusive colourings, is frequently imposed upon it for *truth*; *folly* for *wisdom*; nay, sometimes, *vice* for *virtue*.

AND, now, can we think, that these are intellectual endowments, which it is *decent* for us to be *proud* of? Are
self-

self-conceit and *high-mindedness* proper for *man*, in this *infant-state* of his reason, which is so dull in apprehending, and so erroneous in judging; so easily confounded, bribed, awed, entangled; which furnishes us with so little certain knowledge; and is entirely unacquainted with the far greater part of the universe? It is, certainly, most immoderate and unnatural *vanity*, to be elated to high conceits on account of *that*, which has so many, and such obvious, *imperfections* attending it: And nothing can set mankind, in a more *absurd* and *diminutive* point of view; or be a more unanswerable demonstration of the *weakness* of that reason, which they are so apt to magnify, and glory in. Our reason, indeed, is to be highly *valued*, as a *rule* of moral truth, and as affording many plain and easy *directions*, for the conduct and general occurrences of life, both civil and religious; and as it is capable of making very considerable *discoveries*, with respect to the laws of nature, and the constitution and order of the visible world. But while we admire, and are thankful for, its *uses* and *excellencies*, it is equally *fit*, that we be modestly sensible of its *defects*; that we do not encourage it to *grasp* at every thing, and *decide* on points, that are beyond the sphere of its operation: We should never forget our *station* in the universe, and the *rank* we hold, in the *scale* of rational beings.

THUS it appears that *pride* was not made for rational man. It will be found to be much more *incongruous* to his character, if we descend lower, and consider him in his *instincts* and *passions*, and the whole apparatus of his *animal* frame: Which are universally allowed to be, and indeed bear upon them most evident marks of, a lower and less excellent composition. His *passions* are apt to be violent and impetuous; and, unless they are corrected by constant care, and a regular discipline, will cloud the understand-

standing, and destroy its strength and influence. They make him capricious and whimsical, furious and intractable. It is frequently attended with difficulty and uneasiness, to *provide* for the gratification of them, within the bounds of *virtue* and *innocence*: And their *excesses* torment him. They are sometimes so *inconsistent*, as to distract his mind, and suspend his resolution, by keeping it divided between different objects: As a necessary consequence of which, they must render him unfit, for a discreet and vigorous discharge of the *duties* of his *social character*, and the *offices* both of a *speculative*, and *active*, life. And whatever his *self-love* and *partiality* may suggest, to flatter him into a *vain opinion* of his native worth and dignity, from the consideration of the *nobler* faculties of his mind—as to the *inferiour* principles in his constitution, it cannot be disputed, but that (as has been already hinted) he is nearly allied to the *brute* creation; with only this difference, which is entirely to his *disadvantage*, that with regard to strength, and other bodily accomplishments, they have the *prebeminence*; and are exposed to *fewer* infirmities and disorders; and those not *aggravated* by spleen and discontent, by remorse for an imprudent, or vicious, behaviour, or gloomy presages of many dreadful, though imaginary, *consequences*, which render the weight, of the present affliction, much more grievous and insupportable. So that the whole *animal* frame, in every view of it, affords *mortifying* reflections; and is a scene of *humiliation*, very proper to be often represented to our minds, in order, thoroughly, to extirpate all the seeds of *arrogance* and *pride*.

To conclude this head, man is a being, in innumerable instances, *impotent* and *defenceless*, liable to many calamities, which he cannot *foresee*, nor, consequently, *guard* against, and to others, which,

which, if he could foresee, it would not be in his power to *prevent*—Even to such unfortunate revolutions and cross events, as may efface his hopes, and overturn his most promising schemes, of self-enjoyment. He is so far from being sufficient, *alone*, for his own happiness, that he depends upon the *help* of *others*, for most of the common pleasures and advantages of life—and, especially, for his knowledge, the *right turn* of his mind, his *virtues*, which may be, in a great measure, owing to their instructions, and good example, and the care they have used, in conducting, and prescribing to him, in his first injudicious and unexperienced years; for his *health*, likewise, which is preserved, or restored, by their advice, or charitable assistance; for *preservations* from danger, and the *easy* and *flourishing* state of his affairs, which may be owing to their affection and fidelity. And therefore, as the result of all this, *humility*, which is a virtue immediately founded on a *right knowledge* of human nature, forcibly dictates this momentous *social* truth, the foundation of *all offices* in *society* without exception; *viz.* that were men to stand *single*, and without a mutual *communion* and *intercourse* of kind and friendly actions, they would be much more *helpless* than inferior animals, as their wants are more numerous: And, especially, as the tenderness and infirmity, of their infant-state, is of much longer continuance, their *distress* must, of necessity, be the more deplorable. This is, undoubtedly, a wise law of nature, since mankind are designed for *social* converse and duties; have peculiar *principles*, and *affections*, in their nature, directing, and strongly tending, to such employments as these; and the faculty of *speech*, to be the instrument of commerce in *society*: While the *brutes* are *destitute* of the one; and therefore it is, that, to all rational and generous purposes, they are *incapable* of the other.

BUT

BUT it may be said, that the *natural state* of man may be *raised* and *refined*, by the cultivations of art and industry—Let us, therefore, proceed the next step, and consider him in his highest *improvements*; and see, whether thus adorned, and appearing in his utmost glory and perfection, it becomes him to discard *humility*. The *noblest* and most *shining* improvements, that human nature is capable of, are either of the *intellectual*, or *moral*, kind; or, in other words, improvements in *knowledge*, and *virtue*. For as to *refinements* in luxury, in awkwardness and extravagance of dress, and the arts of furnishing out new, and various, scenes of genteel impertinence and debauchery; as for *these*, I say, together with the dark *intrigues*, *evasions*, and *subtilties*, of a dishonest policy: I can, by no means, look upon them as improvements, which are at all to the *honour* of mankind, or which, upon a just estimate, and where there is a right notion of things, can excite any but uneasy and *debasing* reflections. The *other* I shall distinctly, but briefly, consider, in order to shew, that, though they are a natural and proper foundation of *self-esteem*, they afford no excuse for *pride* or *ostentation*.

FOR, *first*, let it be considered, that even *those decisions* of reason, which we look upon to be clear and certain, are frequently erroneous, and either the *principles*, it argues from, are too hastily assumed, or the *conclusions*, it draws, fallacious and sophistical. Again, a *great part* of what remains, of the *boasted* and *celebrated* human knowledge, goes no further than the *surfaces* of things, without penetrating into their *inward composition*, or thoroughly understanding their *properties*. There are inexplicable *mysteries*, in almost all the objects we converse with. Nay, we are *confounded*, when we look into *ourselves*,

and can give very little *satisfactory* account of our own *complex* frame; nor comprehend the *manner*, in which the thinking principle is united with the material, animates the corporeal system, and commands and regulates its motions.

AND if we know so very little even of those objects, with which we are most *intimately* and *familiarly* acquainted, it is no wonder, that our conceptions are so short and dark, with regard to others, that are *remote* from us: And that, after having made the highest proficiency, and with the utmost efforts of the most enlarged and active genius, there is no more *insight* gained into futurity; no more *adequate comprehension* of the works of nature, in their immense extent, variety, structure, and uses; that every thing *still* surprizes us; and the more we examine, we find, *behind*, greater matter for wonder and curiosity; and, in a word, that we discern *distinctly*, and can speak *intelligibly*, but of a *very few* of the operations of divine wisdom, while *infinitely* more is concealed from our enquiries, and wrapped up, at present, in thick impenetrable darkness. All this is no real *disgrace* to us, nor the least diminution of the *true honour* of our nature; which, notwithstanding the limitation of its faculties with respect to the *whole*, is, in *its kind*, *perfect*. But if, with such mixtures of error, and confusion in our best reasonings, and when we are ignorant of infinitely more, than we can pretend, with any tolerable exactness, to understand, we are puffed up with *self-conceit*, and *insolently* boast of our knowledge; such imprudent, and ridiculous, *affectation* must represent the shortness of our views, and the narrowness of our intellectual capacities, in a *meaner* and more *abject* light. And thus, what is, in itself, only our *misfortune*, for which no generous being, of a superior rank, would *insult* us, is converted into a *just object* of *contempt*.

IN strict propriety, the most applauded *wisdom* of mankind is *relative*, and *comparative*, only. In respect of the creatures *below* him, who discover scarce *any*, and those but *rude* and *unconnected*, sketches of reason, *man* may fairly lay *claim*, to a character for knowledge and judgment: And *compared* with many of their own species, whose faculties are neglected and uncultivated, *some persons* of distinguished abilities, and extraordinary application, may be stiled *eminently wise*. And they, who thus *excel*, may be sensible of their superiority in both these kinds, without the imputation of *pride* and *arrogance*. But notwithstanding—What may be stiled wisdom, in this *comparative* view, may, *in itself*, be a very weak and superficial comprehension of things. The *eminent degrees* of knowledge for *a man* may be, in many instances, childish speculation, and mixed with a much larger proportion of ignorance. And that our improvements in this way are, in reality, very *low* and *inconsiderable*, we shall soon be convinced, if we reflect coolly and impartially, how much *more refined* and *enlarged* sentiments, we ourselves can imagine, some superior beings may be capable of; in comparison of *whom*, *we* may make, at least, as mean and trifling a figure in the rational world, as the very *lowest* of mankind do, in comparison of the *highest*. But nothing will so thoroughly depress the *insolence*, and *ostentation*, of human wisdom, as to *compare* it with that of the infinite mind, who comprehends, at one view, not only the actual existences, but all the possibilities of things; and has discovered such a profusion of exquisite skill, in the minutest of his works, as the united reason of all mankind cannot equal, nor imitate, nor even justly, and fully, explain.

BUT if the *intellectual* improvements of man are so defective, that a just reflection will deduce, from thence, arguments for *humility*, and not for *pride*; is there not more colour of reason, is there not a stronger temptation, for him to be *vain* of his *moral*; which are the rectitude and chief dignity of his, and of every intelligent, nature? I answer, that there are several things, which prove beyond all contradiction, that a too *high opinion* of himself, on account of his *goodness*, is altogether as unbecoming his character, as gross and inexcusable an excess, as to be *over-conceited* of his *wisdom*.

FOR it often happens, that a great deal of *his virtue* is only constitutional, the impulse, and almost irresistible tendency, of his natural disposition; and, so far, it can have no more proper *merit* in it, or claim to a *reward*, than his being originally formed a man. And considering the *imperfection* of all real genuine virtue, and how far it falls short of the *sublimity*, and *purity*, with which we may suppose it to be exercised, by some superior beings; considering, how far it is *debased* by ostentation, and the desire of popularity, and that, in the *best* characters, it does not *always spring* from its right principles, but is *mixed* with some meaner and more sordid view, and *alloyed* by defects, that in part obscure its lustre, and deprave its worth; considering, likewise, how often it is *interrupted*, and *diverted* from an uniform and steady course, by irregular passions, and that the most *perfect* are chargeable with *this guilt* at least, that they have scarce, in any instance, cultivated their moral powers to *that degree*, to which they were capable of being raised, and improved: I say, if we reflect on all these particulars, to which others might, doubtless, be added, we shall see abundant reason to conclude, that

that *pride* is a monstrous ingredient, even in the most *exalted* characters, and *blemishes* their native excellence; and that a *humble modest* temper, and conduct, are absolutely necessary to make them *finished* characters, and give them a distinguished *gracefulness* and *lustre*.

ADD to this, that what we may call, by way of distinction, a *religious pride* (though the things indeed are, in themselves, strangely inconsistent) is apt to *arrogate*, and *confine*, all that is worthy and valuable to itself: And those, who are infected with *this kind of pride*, being ravished with the singular beauties of their own pretended holiness, will be induced, too easily, to look upon others as *defiled*, and *unfit* for their spiritual conversation; and to keep at a *distance* from them, as if they feared, that their own refined and perfect virtue would be corrupted and blasted by their grosser impurities. They generally affect to be *retired* within themselves, to gain the reputation of men *abstracted* from the world, and engaged in close and constant *communion* with GOD: And, by this means, it is scarce possible, but they must contract a spirit *averse* to *society*, and to all the *communicative* and *generous offices* of it; and, in the end, a settled habit of *rudeness* and *ill-manners*.

AND NOW, if *pride* be *not made* for the *wise* man, nor for the *virtuous* man; it must be extremely *unsuitable* to him, who has no *other desert* to plead, but his outward *honours*, and the advantages of his *situation* and *fortune*. For all these external *trappings*, and *decorations*, of life, may be the effect of chance; of wrong judgment; of fancy, and partiality; or spring, at first, from baseness of temper, and successful wickedness. But however

ever they are *acquired*, and *conveyed* to the immediate possessor, they can add nothing to his true worth, which is entirely *intin- sical*; independent on titles, and arbitrary marks of dignity; independent on the favour of princes, on the giddy applauses of the multitude, or on any accidents, and the revolutions, in the course of human affairs.

IF a man be really illustrious, on account of his own *uncommon merit*, and, consequently, his outward distinctions *become* him, and fit *naturally, gracefully, and easily* upon him, he may *respect* himself, and be *pleased* with his condition; and inspired with a *laudable ambition*, to support, in a right manner, the *greatness* of it. But what, even upon this supposition, has he to be *proud* of? If not of his *intellectual* and *moral* accomplishments, (as has been already shewn) most surely, not of his *temporary honours*, which may fall, indiscriminately, to the share of the most worthless and undeserving. And as, amidst the largest accession of *wealth*, and in the most *exalted* station, he must (as has been already hinted to be the case of all mankind) *depend* on some of the very *lowest* of his species, for assistance and defence, and for many of the chief conveniences, and comforts, of his present being; this should effectually suppress every inclination to *insolence*, and *proud contempt* of his inferiors: Who enjoy, *equally* with himself, the *greatest* of all *honours*, of which the nature of man is susceptible, *viz.* that of *deriving* their frame from the universal *father of spirits*, and of being *formed* after *his image*. This last branch of *pride*, which I have been considering, is what St. *John* styles, with a particular emphasis, *the pride of life* *; and it is, by far, the most *impertinent, senseless,*

* 1 John ii. 16.

and *insulting*, of all that have been mentioned, and argues a most *narrow, contracted, and unsocial* mind.

UPON the whole, let us be persuaded, by what has been now offered, to mortify every species, every degree, of *pride*, which has been shewn to be a *monstrous* excrescence in human nature, and most *unbecoming* the character of *a man*, in every circumstance, in which we can possibly place him; which aggravates the *guilt* of his evil actions, and debases, and lessens, the *merit* of his good ones. A *proud* mans injuries and oppressions, being mixed with scorn and insult, are *doubly criminal*; and his favours lose the greatest part of their *value*, by the disagreeable manner of their being conferred. Acts of beneficence almost cease to be virtues *in him*, and demand but small returns, of praise and gratitude, *from others*.

ON the contrary, *humility* is one of the most ornamental, and useful, branches of moral excellence: And, taken in its just *latitude*, is inseparably connected with profound and submissive reverence of GOD, and all the various offices of *kindness, gentleness, and condescension* to men. Let us therefore cultivate, to the utmost, this amiable *disposition*; which is so *agreeable* to our limited and dependent state, to the original constitution, and present circumstances, of human nature. And, as so many most weighty and powerful motives to it, let us consider, that it is, in itself, a *calm, composed, and placid* temper, the true source of self-enjoyment; and utterly inconsistent with *envy* and *revenge*, and every other rough, boisterous, and disquieting *passion*—That, as it is a *conformity* to his own scheme of things, and to the visible design of his providence, it must procure for us the
pe-

peculiar *approbation*, and *esteem*, of the GOD of *nature*, our supreme ruler and judge—And, finally, that it is an essential *preparation*, for our living hereafter in that superior glorious world, where the *proud* will find no employment; where each will know *his place*, and the *respect* due to others of the blessed inhabitants; where *civil titles*, and the rules of *precedency* observed among men, will be entirely laid aside, as *too low* for such an improved and perfect state; and nothing will be esteemed a greater honour, or a brighter mark of distinction, than the *ornament* of a *gentle* and *humble spirit*. And nothing can set, in a clearer light, the close affinity, which *humility* bears to all the *social virtues*, than this, *viz.* its being a *necessary disposition* for enjoying the honours, and pleasures, of the most *exalted social* state of human nature; when, in the language of *Heathen* philosophy, we shall be joined to *Socrates*, *Plato*, and all the great *sages*, wise *lawgivers*, and *virtuous characters*, of antiquity—but, in the language of the *Gospel*, which is vastly more extended and forcible,—to the *spirits* of all the *just made perfect*, to an *innumerable company of Angels*, to *Jesus*, the *mediator of the new covenant*, and to *God* the everlasting *Father*, and impartial *Judge*, of all*. The *first* of these, it must be allowed, is a *classical* expression, and is likely, upon that account only, to find peculiar favour in the present age; but the *latter*, I make no doubt, that *Longinus* himself (who has celebrated *Moses's* account of *the creation*) would, if he had an opportunity of comparing the passages together, pronounce to be the *true sublime*.

* Hebr. xii. 22, 23, 24.

With respect to *meekness*, after what has been so largely discoursed, concerning the true nature of *humility*, I need say but little: The two virtues are in many points, in a great measure, *coincident*; and the former may, perhaps, be not unfitly considered, as a *branch* of the latter. I shall therefore conclude this chapter, with the following brief remarks. *First*, that the virtue of *meekness* does not denote a *tame pusillanimous* temper, that has not resolution enough, to assert its natural and just rights——That it is not an *indolent* temper, unconcerned about the general state of the world, and its own situation and character in it——Nor is it an *over-awed, timorous, and depressed* spirit——But it stands *opposed* to discontent and disquietude, to pride and turbulence of spirit, to intemperate excesses of passion and anger, and, finally, to extremes of resentment, and a boisterous revengeful disposition.

AND from hence it undeniably appears, that *meekness* is of very great importance among the *social virtues*. For though it be not, itself, the principle, that *directly prompts* to offices of goodness, though it be not direct *benevolence, and sympathy*, of soul; yet it *suppresses* those inflamed and peevish passions, which are the *natural enemies to mercy*: And is therefore the proper *introduction*, the proper *school of imitation and discipline*, for the *culture* of this more advanced and glorious virtue. *Meekness* stills the *hurtful, mercy* animates and employs the more and *generous and useful*, affections: *Meekness composes*, that mercy may *soften*: So that, upon the whole, it may be said, that all, which *meekness*, in its particular nature, is deficient in, *mercy perfects*. The one is the *preparation*, the other the *actual disposition*, for relieving distress, and promoting the universal good of mankind.

BUT if *humility* and *meekness* are considered as *distinct*, there will still be an inviolable *connection*, between all the three virtues—As *humility*, by the sense it has of its own weakness and imperfection, and from a consciousness of the innumerable failings, and indiscretions, of human nature, must naturally produce *meekness*; and *meekness* beget *mercy*.

O F F I C E S
O F
D E V O T I O N,
Suited to the
P R I N C I P A L S U B J E C T S,
Treated upon in the foregoing
D I S C O U R S E S.

Offices of Devotion, &c.

On man's natural power to find out G O D.



ETERNAL and fovereign Spirit,——who art the light and life of the world ; we cannot but esteem it an eminent distinction, which thou hast conferred upon our nature, that we are capable of knowing thee, the centre of all perfection, and the source of all good. Thy works, O GOD, are immense, full of wonder, and demanding everlasting praise. And to vary the scenes of existence, for the largest and most diffusive communication, of good, thou hast been pleased to form innumerable other beings, besides mankind, endued with life and sense ; who, through the imperfection of their make, can neither *discern* thy power which upholds, thy presence which animates, nor thy kind and gracious influence, that cheers and comforts their frame.

BUT thou hast planted a *spirit* in man, to which thine almighty inspiration hath given superior measures of understanding. And we pray,——that this noblest part of our composition may never sink so far below its dignity, and the end of its peculiar
creation,

creation, that it may never fall into such a state of error and wretchedness, as to be *alienated* from thy service and honour. Fix in us a steady conviction, that from our natural capacity of knowing thee, our most *refined* pleasures, and surest supports spring; and that these, while we are fitly disposed to receive and enjoy them, and thou, O GOD, who inhabitest eternity, continuest to exist, can never fail. Impress these thoughts ever upon our minds, — that all virtue, by resulting from thine *all-wise constitution* of nature, is more firmly established, as an universal and unalterable tie; that its beauty and excellence are more clearly illustrated, and its authority more strongly enforced, by its being a *law* of thy *supreme government*; and that all power, honour, order, every thing great and good, every thing lovely and desirable, are contained in, and must be originally derived from thee.

AND under a deep sense of this most sure and important truth, that without the belief of thy being, and watchful providence, utter uncertainty of happiness, and apprehensions full of dread, must be diffused throughout the whole moral world, we have the highest reason to rejoice, O thou *first all-creating power*, that thy bright and glorious footsteps, and the evidences of thy being, engraven in shining characters, may be distinctly traced, through every part of the vast system of nature. By the numberless effects of intelligence and power which we clearly see, not one of which could be the cause of its own existence, we are necessarily led to acknowledge and adore thee, as the first and universal cause, the maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible, and invisible; the former of all material substances, and the father of all spirits. And as the whole of this stupendous fabric was thy *designed* and *free production*, so, to convince us, that every thing in it is continually dependent upon thee, thou hast
made

made it in all its parts, and with all its beauties, efficacies, connections, and uses, unfixed and fluctuating, and subject to infinite *changes*: So that thou canst *alter* as thou pleasest, or *destroy* in an instant, all that thy right-hand of power and majesty hath *formed*. To thee, therefore, would we always direct our views, O *self-existent* GOD, who wast unchangeably the same, before the *mountains were brought forth*, or *ever the foundations of the world were laid*——to support our frame, and uphold that being, which thou hast been pleased to vouchsafe unto us——and to preserve us, by humble acquiescence and duty, inseparably united to thee, and in the enjoyment of a dignity and happiness suited to our rank, for ever.

LET us, with profound devotion, celebrate thy praise, for the greatness of thy majesty, and wisdom, displayed in the immensity of the works of nature, their correspondence to each other, their exact proportions; in the exquisite structure of particulars, and the harmonious order, and magnificent composition of the whole.—*All thy works, O GOD, praise thee*: The blessed inhabitants of heaven, who have been witnesses to the wonders of thy creating might, magnify thee: And may all thy rational creatures, as if inspired by one spirit, join in this holy act of *adoration*, and say, *Thou art worthy, O LORD, who sittest upon the throne, and livest for ever and ever, to receive glory, and honour, and power. For, thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.* Amen.

A short prayer; being a continuation of the same subject.

AND now having discovered thee, O great cause and author of nature, — *that thou art, and, in some measure, what thou art*; we commit ourselves to thy continual guidance and direction. Do thou, whose all-powerful word did at first command *light* to arise out of *darkness*, assist our sincere and humble enquiries, that we may *find* out *more* of thee, and be led on to discern more distinctly, what *attributes* we ought to ascribe unto thee. Dispel, in part, our ignorance, and those clouds of error, that are apt to attend our most serious and impartial reasonings, upon a subject so sublime, and, in its full extent of glory, incomprehensible. And from what we certainly know of thy wonderful works, let us learn a rational submission, and confidence in thee, as to those innumerable other things, that at present remain concealed from us, and wrapped up in darkness. Let not *pride* and *prejudgment* mislead us. Let not low and irregular *passions* debase, and enfeeble, our understandings. Let not any corrupt *prejudice* darken our minds, and intercept our views of thee. Let not *superstition*, by disturbing our imaginations, and alarming our fears, betray us into dishonourable and impious conceptions of thee — by placing, on thine eternal throne of *supremacy*, an *idol* whom we cannot truly reverence, or an object of *horror* that we cannot love. But be pleased to grant, O father of our spirits, that, so far as our faculties can extend, we may *see thee as thou art*, and form just and worthy notions of thine infinite excellence. May our knowledge
of

of thee purify and elevate our hearts, and make us *partakers of a divine nature*.

AND whilst thine eternity, and self-origination, (astounding and unfathomable attributes,) fill our souls with admiration and a solemn awe ; let us not bewilder ourselves in bold conjectures, and vain attempts to explain, what is so far beyond the utmost scope of our reason. But let us be contented with knowing thus much, and animated to pursue steadily the great end of our being, by this pleasing reflection——that there is, and will continue to be for ever, a wise, just, and good principle, of eternal and resistless power, to preside over, dispose, and guide to happiness, the universe of rational beings.

AND as *thou*, O LORD, art in *thyself*, and in thine essential attributes, such let our principles of *religion* always be ; despising all weak and trivial mixtures, disclaiming every thing unfocial, every thing gloomy and terrifying, (unless to wilful and incorrigible vice ;) that it may appear in a light, honourable to thee, the universal Creator, and friendly to all thy creatures.—By a conduct strictly conformable to the rules of such a religion as this, so rational, wise, and in all respects worthy of thee, may we find that favour in thy sight, which the light of nature teaches us to hope for, and which in these last ages of the world thou hast expressly promised, by Jesus Christ ; through whom we would offer up to thee our supreme praises, and everlasting homage. *Amen*.

Devotions and prayers suited to the unity of G O D.

O THOU infinite Creator of the world, as thy being, *thine eternal power and Godhead*, have, from the beginning of the world, been *clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*—We likewise acknowledge, that all nature loudly proclaims thee to be, the *only living and true GOD*; *GOD in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath*, and throughout all worlds; and that there is *none besides thee*. *Thou dost stretch out the heavens ALONE, and hang the earth upon nothing*: And by reason of thy necessary being, thine independence, and immensity, thy supreme power, and wisdom, thou art capable of creating all possible worlds, nor can any of thy works be rendered more complete, and admirable.

WE, therefore, the creatures of thy power, and thy *reasonable off-spring*, whom thou hast made capable of celebrating thy praises, do most humbly adore thee, as *only good, only holy*; as the Father of the intellectual and moral world, and the *blest and only potentate*, who rulest supreme over all, and *who alone hast immortality*. Both good and evil spring from thee; thou *formest the light and the darkness*: Thou *makest peace and createst evil*: And all these *mixed scenes*, we humbly acknowledge, to be *wisest and best* upon the whole, and most exactly fitted to the different powers, and circumstances, of thy creatures.

AND

AND we devoutly pray, O thou first and greatest of all beings, absolutely perfect, that to *thee alone*, we may solemnly and everlastingly devote ourselves, and consecrate the noblest powers of our souls. Let us not degrade thy transcendent majesty, nor stain thy matchless glory, by imagining that any either in heaven, or in earth, can be *likened to*, or *compared with thee*. Let us make thee the *supreme* object of our religious worship, the *only* object of our highest reverence, love, and adoration. Let our hope and confidence ultimately center in thee, as the source from whence all our comfort must flow; as the original fountain of mercy, and the only sovereign dispenser of happiness and misery, to us, and to the whole creation. May we approach *thy* throne, for greater degrees of wisdom and purity; for the supply of our various wants; to relieve and succour us, under all our distresses; to overlook our involuntary errors; to pardon, upon our sincere contrition and repentance, our more gross and heinous crimes; and to concur with our diligent and faithful endeavours, to strengthen our souls; and correct every thing that is amiss——That we may be thoroughly purged from all vicious habits and passions, and may acquire a steady and invincible resolution to improve in universal virtue, and in a nearer and brighter resemblance of thee. In this way alone, O thou only G O D and Father of all, do we presume to implore thy favour. Do thou graciously enable us *to be workers together with thee*, that we may, in our inward temper, be rendered fit objects of thy mercy. Afford us the communications of thy grace, only in that measure and degree which is most *wise* and *fit*, honourable to thy perfections, and consistent with the general rules of thy moral government. May we venerate and stand in awe of thee, may we be contented and patient

under all events, consenting to be governed wholly by thy laws, and acquiescing, with the most entire submission, in all the dispensations of thy providence.—Being firmly persuaded, that as thou art the *sole self-existent first cause*, and the uncontrollable disposer of all things throughout the universe; all other *powers*, all *secondary causes*, subsist every moment by thy continual influence; that there is, and can be, but *one* ultimate end of creation, and providence, pursued through the several periods of time, and to all eternity; and that nature, in all its operations, and the highest and brightest orders of intelligent spirits, are only thy *ministers* to execute thy vast designs.

WE would therefore rejoice in thee always, O thou *One supreme*, whose spirit animates, and acts unrestrained, to the utmost bounds of all worlds. In thee, O GOD, we rejoice, who maintainest *one* uniform *order* in the government of the moral world, and hast fixed but *one* universal and unchangeable law of all rational beings——that *in every nation*, they that *truly fear thee*, and, according to the degrees of light, and the advantages which they severally enjoy, *work righteousness*, may find *acceptance* with thee. To thee therefore, with whom alone is *the fountain of life*, who makest order to spring from confusion, and good from evil, and hast so graciously established one certain method, by which all mankind may secure thy favour——to thee, who livest, and reignest, ever *One GOD*, we desire, as thy reasonable creatures, and *in the name of Christ*, to ascribe supreme *unrivalled* glory, and everlasting praises.
Amen.

A prayer directed to G O D as a spirit.

O GOD, in this imperfect limited state of our knowledge, and surrounded as we are with darkness, we desire always to *seek after thee* with reverence and humility, and to continue our searches with ardour and earnestness of spirit; that we may trace some of thy footsteps, and get glimmering notices of thee, where we can never fully comprehend thee.

WE are, notwithstanding this, thankful for the rank of our nature, which thou hast placed amongst the noblest orders of thy creatures. And that we may not err through the weakness of our reason, being placed at such a distance from the light of thy throne, may we take the utmost care never to ascribe to thee any properties, that have the least appearance of *limitation* or *defect*. We see nothing, in the whole *material* world, that can give us the faintest idea, or yield the most distant resemblance, of what thou art, or of the sublime ineffable manner, in which thou existest. All these scenes, so astonishing, grand, and splendid, and shining with numberless beauties, are unintelligent, inactive, fading, transitory, and liable to an entire decay and dissolution; and *reasonable* beings alone bear any impressions of thine *image*. We are led therefore, in order to express in the most just and proper manner, the exalted veneration which we have of thy matchless glory, to adore thee as a refined and perfect
spirit,

spirit, without *bodily* parts, sensations, or passions, and entirely divested of all *material mixtures*.

O THOU great incomprehensible, *whom no man hath seen, nor can see*, whose *voice no one hath heard at any time*, nor *seen thy shape*, suffer us not to be so wofully infatuated, as to *worship thee*, who art a pure and infinite *spirit*, by sensible images, or visible symbols of thy presence and glory, which thou hast not prescribed. But conceiving of thee, as incapable of being in the least degree impressed by outward shew and ostentation, let us *worship thee* with an enlightened understanding, and an uncorrupted sincerity; and recommend all our adorations, prayers, and thanksgivings, to thine acceptance and favourable regard, by the purity of our souls, and the strict and constant virtue and goodness of our lives. Let all the acts of devotion, which we presume to offer up unto thee, not consist in mere bodily prostrations and services, nor in heat of fancy, and the raptures of a wild enthusiasm; but be sober, calm, and rational. May they be in all respects so formed, and so conducted, as to be worthy to be presented to a being of unerring and boundless wisdom. Thus, O Father of our spirits, may we be of the number of those, whom thou *seekest* and requirest, *to worship thee*. And grant, above all, that our most solemn offices of religion may not, by corrupt views, or impure mixtures of dissimulation and hypocrisy, be rendered an abomination in thy sight: But let us offer up continually holy, sublime, and *spiritual* sacrifices, acceptable, *through Jesus Christ*, to thee, O *king eternal, immortal, and invisible*; to whom belong, universal dominion and glory. *Amen.*

A form of devotion to be offered up to GOD as omniscient.

O LORD, most wonderful in all thy perfections,—— as thou art GOD, *from everlasting to everlasting*, and didst, in the beginning, *lay the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands*; so earth, air, and sea, and *the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee*. Thou not only art, and always must be, present with every part of the real universe of beings, and wherever any part of *thine own creation* subsists; thy preserving providence, thine animating spirit, thine efficacious influence diffused through the whole, not only supports the worlds that *now are*; but as thou existest in the infinite spaces, beyond the utmost bounds of all worlds, thou must be capable of unlimited exertions of thy power and goodness, and of creating new orders of intelligent beings, to praise thee, and to be made happy by thee, *for ever*.

AND (as closely connected with thine *omnipresence*) we adore thine *amazing knowledge*, which reaches to, perceives with an infallible certainty, and thoroughly comprehends, all subjects that are capable of being known: Which is completely acquainted with whatever does, or can, *exist*; and with whatever is, or can be, *true*, with respect to all beings, and all the properties and circumstances of things.

WE acknowledge, in this respect, as well as in all others, the infinite distance that there is between thee and us; and that the most exalted of mankind, from their own experience, and the operations of their own powers, cannot rise to the least distinct conception of the *manner*, in which thine infinite understanding discerns the most minute parts of nature, and much less, *how* it takes in at once the vast expanse of the creation, and, in one view, comprehends all the possibilities of things. We acknowledge, that by what passes within ourselves, we can learn little more, than that the *wonderful ways of thee, O GOD*, who art *perfect in knowledge*, are by us inscrutable, and infinitely remote from our circumscribed and scanty faculties. We desire therefore, with the deepest humility, to worship before the throne of thine infinity: Being fully convinced, that we can then, only, entertain, worthy and respectful sentiments, (though still infinitely disproportioned to the subject) when we raise thy divine omniscience, as far as is possible, above the utmost efforts of all created understandings; and suppose it, in the height, and depth, and glorious extent in which thou possessest it, to be *incommunicable* not to us only, but to all finite natures.

THY knowledge, O GOD, is unclouded and universal light, in which thou sittest enthroned; though, with respect to us, *Clouds and darknes are round about thee*. Let the *angels of light* praise thee, to whom, thou hast been pleased to communicate more extensive capacities, for discovering the wonders of thine omniscience. And let all mankind cheerfully join, (to those of the bright celestial hosts, that are round about thy throne) their fainter and more imperfect praises: Esteeming it their honour, and the most worthy employment and exaltation of their faculties,

culties, to bear a part in this glorious harmony. Let earth unite with heaven, in rendering the homage that is due to thee, whose *judgments are unsearchable, and thy ways past finding out.*

NATURE, in its most hidden recesses, lies all *unveiled and open* to thy view : For she is thy *creature*. All things that now *are*, and the *present* actual scene of things for ever, must be entirely subject to thy clear and infallible discernment : *Thine eyes, O LORD, are in every place ; thou lookest to the ends of the earth, and seeest under the whole heaven.* Equally known likewise, to thine infinite understanding, are all *past* events ; all thine own works, and all the designs and actions of thy creatures, from the *beginning of the world.*

BUT, O GOD, when we carry our devout contemplations beyond all this, and adore thy stupendous omniscience, not only as reaching to all the *present* and the *past*, even to the utmost limits of the universe ; but perceiving as distinctly, as if they were actually present, remote and dark *futurities*, and giving a kind of determinate being, in thy vast unbounded mind, to all *possible* events——When, O eternal fountain of intellectual light and truth, we celebrate, with humble piety, this matchless and ineffable glory of thy nature ; our faculties are swallowed up, and in a manner lost, in so deep and immense a subject.

MAY these thoughts never be erased from our minds ; but impress upon us a more serious and awful veneration of thee, the great original, and everlasting support, of universal life and being : May we be inspired with a spirit of holy admiration, and praise. May we be struck with a just sense of our own meanness, and

of our being, if compared with thee, *less than nothing and vanity*. May our reason be in our own opinion (thoroughly purged from all remains of pride, and presumption) so debased, and, in comparison with infinity, so contracted and despicable, that we may readily submit to thy guidance, and be always disposed to receive thy pure and divine illuminations. May our spirits be reduced to that proper order, so modest, calm, and teachable, and open to instruction; that we may maintain a constant, uninterrupted intercourse with thee, *with whom is no darkness at all*. And, that we, O blessed God, (to whom thou hast been pleased to communicate a ray from thy supreme intelligence) may attain to a greater resemblance of thee; let us according to our several powers, advantages, and *stations* in life, steadily pursue, and endeavour to excel in, all important and useful knowledge. Deliver us more completely from the infatuations of indolence, and pride; from the blind and enslaving power of prejudice, and vice. May the improvements of knowledge be delightful to our souls. Let us prefer the pleasures of the understanding, which enoble our frame, and gratify our most refined desires, infinitely beyond the unworthy, unsatisfying, fleeting satisfactions of sensuality, and a brutal life. And do thou preside over, and direct, all our enquiries in such a manner, as that we may be preserved from every dangerous and fatal error; and led to discern all those truths, which are either necessary, or of great importance, to our happiness.

BUT, above all, we pray, that the increasing light of our minds may have such a blessed effect upon us, as to produce suitable degrees of inward refinement, strength, and dignity; and render all our virtues more resplendent and amiable. Let us look upon ignorance *itself*, as the soul's nakedness and shame;
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and upon the corruption of our principles of conduct, thorough wilful vitious ignorance, as its greatest infelicity.—These our humble petitions, we are encouraged to offer up unto thee, (in comfortable hope of thy gracious acceptance, and condescending favour.) O *our heavenly father*, who are the former of *all souls*, to which thou hast an easy access; and canst guide and influence them in various ways, that are consistent with thy wise government of the moral world, and with the *free exercise* of their natural powers.

The same continued.

WE desire to continue our acts of devotion, and our earnest supplications to thee for farther help, O LORD, *who hast searched us, and known us. Thou knowest our down-sitting, and our up-rising, thou understandest our thought afar off. Thou compassest our path, and our lying-down, and art acquainted with all our ways: And there is not a word in our tongue, but, lo! O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.* Let these considerations deeply affect our hearts, and raise, and preserve, in us, an habitual regard to thee, and fear to offend thee. Let us never be such stupid and daring sinners, as to allow ourselves under thine intimate *view and inspection*, in the indulgence of impure and extravagant passions; or in any practices, which our reason, and thy holy and immutable law, condemn, as a stain and blemish to our nature. In so awful and majestic *a presence*, let us be ashamed of all baseness and dishonesty. Let us look upon thine approbation and esteem, as the highest pitch of glory we can attain to; and to secure it, trample under foot the applauses of our fellow-creatures, and all worldly honours. *Naked and open*, as our thoughts, designs, and works are *to thee*, and subject to thy righteous judgment, let purity of thought, circumspection of spirit, and the strictest regularity of conduct, never forsake us. May we be strongly convinced, and live under the constant lively impression, of these great truths——that no disguises can shelter from *thine eye*; that all arts and colourings of hypocrisy are
vain;

vain ; that *the darknefs and the light are both alike to thee* ; nor is *there any fhadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can hide themfelves.*

AND, O thou great *trier of the hearts of the children of men*, let not our fpirits be depressed, and fink within us ; let not the ftrength and ftadinefs of our refolution, or the ardor of our zeal for the fared caufe of religion, and the honour of thy laws and government, in the leaft abate ; however we may be fufpected, flandered, vilified, and unjuftly perfecuted, by the craft, pride, and malice of the ungodly. Let us not, by a bafe, and cowardly renouncing our faith in thee, and the testimony of a good confcience, give occafion to the enemies of truth and mercy, (with whom worldly *power and gain are godlinefs*) to blafpheme and triumph : But defpifing all their cruelty and terror, and deriving, fo far as we are confcious of our integrity, inward encouragement and comfort, from the contemplation of thine omnifcience, may we be *ftedfaft, and unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the LORD.*

AND, O GOD, while we nobly affert, and with calmnefs, firmnefs, and intrepidity of mind, contend for, our own freedom and independency, but on thee alone ; let us fincerely abhor, and to the utmoft of our power oppofe, all ufurped *dominion* over the *faith and confciences* of others. Keep us from being transported by a blind intemperate zeal, or an impofing violent fpirit, to pronounce rash and uncharitable cenfures upon the final ftate of any of our brethren ; leaft we incur the heavy guilt of invading thine awful prerogative, before the tribunal of whole omnifcience only, the *hearts* of men are cognizable, and who alone *art able to fave, and to deftroy.*—Wherever our lot is caft,

cast, and whatever our station and rank of life may be, whether public, or private, social, or solitary, of more enlarged, or contracted influence, may we be equally careful to discharge every part of our duty to thee, *our father, who seeſt in ſecret.*

BUT let it be our highest concern, and the principal scope of our ambition, and of all our endeavours, to fix deep, in our minds, the *ſeeds* of univerſal goodneſs, and to cultivate and eſta- bliſh pure, benevolent, and godlike *diſpoſitions*, being ſteadily perſuaded that no diſpoſition to mercy, no generous purpoſe formed, though it was not in our power to execute it, none of our moſt *concealed* and *hidden* virtues can eſcape thy notice, or fail of receiving, from thee, their due honour, and reward. And becauſe none of us can thoroughly *underſtand our errors*, but we are all apt to be miſled by blind partiality and ſelf-deceit, in the judgments which we form concerning ourſelves, do thou, O GOD, who *knoweſt our frame, ſearch us* thoroughly. Illuminate what is dark, calm what is tumultuous, and reduce and regulate whatever is diſorderly; *if there is any wicked way* that is conni- ved at, any *latent ſeed* of iniquity *in us*, diſcover it to us, and enable us to root it out, and *lead us in the way everlaſting.*

WE ſee, O great and bleſſed GOD, with concern and horror, that thine *immensity*, and *all-piercing eye*, are apt to excite dread and averſion in corrupt and vitious minds. And, being deeply affected, with what we know muſt be the extremely miſerable ſtate, of a deſolate, fatherleſs, and ungoverned world of rational creatures; and ſtruck with a ſtrong ſenſe of compaſſion for theſe fatally deluded ſinners; we pray, that they may be reclaimed from this moſt unnatural depravity.—Save them, O God, in ſome way or other that is *beſt known* to thine infinite wiſdom;
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How terrible soever it may be, to their guilty consciences—O, save them, *that they perish not.*

AND together with them, we also pray most earnestly for ourselves,—that our reason may never be so totally darkened, nor any of us become so insensible of the most important privileges, and consolations, of derived and dependent natures, as to wish that it were *even possible* to fly from thy vital and efficacious *spirit*; that animates, and diffuses beauty, and order, and tendencies to happiness, throughout the whole of created beings. May we rejoice in the assurance which we have, that thou being every where present, and the first power in the universe, art able to regulate all affairs in all places, and at all times; so that no confusion can possibly happen, to perplex the plan of thy government, and obstruct its main design.

BUT above all, from an ardent zeal for thy glory, and an earnest desire of the happiness of all our fellow-creatures, would we mix the most generous and sublime *joy* with our praises; when we consider the universe as thy *great temple*, in *every part* of which thou wilt for ever reside, to accept, graciously, the rational and humble homage of *all* thy sincere worshippers —To thee, from this thine *holy*, most magnificent, and glorious temple, may adorations, prayers, and thanksgivings, be continually offered; and may all mankind be speedily *visited by the day-spring from on high*, and brought to join in one solemn form of devotion, with one heart, and one voice, ascribing *glory to thee*, as the GOD of nature, and the GOD and father of *Jesus Christ*, through him the great and *only mediator*. Amen, and Amen.

An adoration of the divine wisdom.

O GOD, who art not only high above all *human* thought, but infinitely exalted beyond all finite conceptions, we humbly acknowledge that thou art in all things, and for all the peculiar glories of thy nature, most *worthy to be praised*.—But amongst the divine perfections, which by their united influence, constitute thy consummate excellence, and render thy being of such vast importance and use to the creation, we are bound, in a particular manner, to celebrate thine infinite *wisdom*; which is underived, independent, and immutable; and in the degree in which thou possessest it, in it's absolute fulness, in it's necessarily unalterable perfection, incapable both of increase and diminution, is thy matchless and sole prerogative. We, therefore, most justly adore thee as *only wise*, and, upon this account, the *only potentate*, and fit to be acknowledged, as the supreme and sole monarch of the world.

AND in this thine universal rule we have the utmost reason to rejoice, when we consider that thine immense and unfathomable wisdom *directs*, and *guides*, all thine other glorious attributes, in their great and stupendous operations:—So that they all conspire to promote the same end, and can never interrupt or obstruct each other. Even thine unbounded power, O GOD, which might otherwise fill us with dread and confusion, is now become a pleasing object of our contemplations, as we are assured,
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that it can never be exerted, but in producing what is *fittest* and *best*. And, O thou perfect excellence, infinitely lovely and adorable, it is thy goodness, as supremely wise, as it is advised, and conducted, and bounded, by wisdom; that we esteem a rational ground of our most chearful and exalted praises: And in which alone we desire to confide, for the defense of the good which we enjoy at present, for the supply of our future wants, and the provision of happiness suited to our whole nature, and to the general state and order of the creation, both now, and for ever.

BUT, O GOD, though we would always acknowledge with profound humility, that it is impossible for us to form an adequate notion of thine unerring wisdom, into the deep recesses of which, nothing but itself can penetrate,—yet, at the same time, we are under the strongest obligations to render thee our devout thanksgivings for the *evidence*, which thou hast been pleased to afford us, that thou art really possessed of this unlimited perfection. We bless and adore thee, that thou hast so dignified our frame, and adorned it with such peculiar faculties, as may enable us to discern the harmony, and inviolable connection of thy several attributes: And to discover by that means, with sufficient clearness and certainty *that* thou art, even when, with respect to degree and extent of excellence, we must be for ever incapable of knowing *how*, or *what*, thou art. And, as we are sure, O GOD, from the operations of our own minds, that there is derived intelligence, and have reason to conclude, from the general order, and correspondence,—and gradual ascent towards perfection, observable in all thine other works, that there are many different and more enlarged capacities of reason, dispersed, by thy skilful and liberal hand, amongst higher orders of intelligent spirits: In thee, who

art the giver and dispenser of the most exalted powers, of all rational creatures, we, with humble veneration acknowledge, that there is, a spring of wisdom, inconceivably beyond the utmost they are capable of acquiring, by a continual progress to eternity.—And in thee, the first cause, and author of universal being, we adore a *fountain of wisdom*, equal to the great work of creation; to the producing an unlimited extent of intelligent creatures; and capable of preserving the whole, in an uninterrupted order, for ever.

BUT, O common father of all spiritual natures, as thou hast been pleased thus far to unvail and manifest thyself to the pure natural reason of our minds, thou hast also graciously adapted the frame of the visible world, in such a manner, as to confirm and strengthen these our inward convictions. In the general constitution of the universe, so far as it is subject to our senses, or falls within the notices and contemplations of the human understanding, we trace *the work of thy fingers*.

WE behold *wonders of wisdom* comprehended in the minutest, as well as more obviously exposed, though even there but in faint and rude sketches, in the greater and more magnificent objects. The deeper we search, the more *thine hand* appears, and the more we discern of inimitable and incomprehensible contrivance. In thy marvellous fabric of nature, though composed of infinitely various parts, we see nothing but one regular consistent scheme. To the glory of thine eternal and unlimited wisdom, we see nothing redundant; nothing short and imperfect, in respect of the general intent and scope of being; nothing disproportioned to its own particular nature and design.

NOR are there wanting, O GOD, among the works of nature, particular instances of thine immense wisdom, the most splendid and illustrious, the most engaging and admirable, to employ our sublimest faculties, and afford abundant matter for our everlasting wonder, reverence, and praise. For it is thou who hast ordained and fixed the sun in the firmament of heaven, so as to dispense his light and heat regularly, and in the most exact proportions, to its dependent planatory worlds——Thou hast marshall'd all the stars, in the nicest order, and preserved them in their proper places——Thou hast *laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed*; till the time cometh for the dissolution of the present system, that thine eternal and inexhaustible wisdom may create new worlds. The whole *earth, O LORD*, we acknowledge, *is full of thy riches*, and affords most glorious proofs of thine infinite skill. And we have equal reason to adore *thy wonders in the deep*, which thou hast so greatly formed, and with such amazing art, as to strike the mind, at the first sight of it, with a religious awe and admiration. We praise thee, O supreme ruler of this vast and mighty *ocean, who hast measured the waters of it in the hollow of thine hand*: That thou hast set a *strict bound which they may not pass over, that they turn not again, to cover the earth*; that thou hast appointed it to supply vapours and clouds, fountains and rivers, to adorn the earth with verdure and beauty, and for the support and refreshment of all its living inhabitants: That thou hast placed in it *creeping things innumerable, both small and great beasts* to administer, in various respect, to the convenience and service of thy rational creature, man. And we, above all, praise thee for this most illustrious effect of thy gracious wisdom, that thou hast made the watry regions, a means of common society, and mutual friendship, to all mankind,

of the most distant nations of the earth. Thus, O GOD, are we, inspired, and strongly animated, by considering the greatness of thy works, their admirable composition, exquisite beauties, and harmonious and variously conspiring uses, for the making all to centre in one common point of universal good, — to magnify thee, the great former and disposer of the whole. *Mighty art thou, O LORD, in wisdom, and thy thoughts are very deep; thou art wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. Wisdom was co-eternal with thee, and thou didst possess her in the beginning of thy ways, before thy works of old.* Thy glory has been from everlasting; and thine be the praise for ever. *Amen.*

A prayer

A prayer adapted to the same subject.

O LORD, *thou hast established the world by thy wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by thy discretion.* Thou hast made every thing perfect in its kind, and *beautiful* in its season. And as thou hast eminently displayed thine astonishing skill in the make of man, and especially in his internal frame——Thou hast also in so exact a manner disposed and adjusted the outward course of things, that by reason of the different relations, orders, and dependencies of mankind, and the variety of incidents and changes which frequently occur in human life, there full scope given for the trial of every temper, and for all godlike, manly, and social virtues, to exert themselves in the utmost dignity and lustre.

To thee therefore, O GOD, who alone art fit to govern thy reasonable creatures, and to regulate the affairs of the universe so as to promote the main end of this thy moral government——To thee, we absolutely refer ourselves. Do thou be pleased to choose and appoint our station of life for us. Let thy will bound all our desires, and regulate all our passions.——If thou determinest prosperity to be our portion, give us a grateful sense of thy distinguishing goodness; and endue us with that temperance of spirit, that generous and enlarged sense of benevolence, that we may, in our several stations, be more extensively useful, and greater blessings to mankind. Let not affluence and plenty
make

make us careless, and luxurious, and devoted to pursuits of vanity. Let it not banish from our breasts, the gentle spirit of humanity, to make way for arbitrariness, insolence and tyranny. Let not any height of wealth or honour, make us forget that we are men, and that all mankind are our brethren—who, through thine infinite wisdom, are ordained to *meet together*, and both *rich* and *poor*, the highest and the lowest, to constitute one great *family*, of which thou art the common father and lord.

BUT if, O thou sovereign and all-disposing mind, if in a world, which, in order to produce what is best upon the whole, thou hast made subject to infinite changes, it should be our lot to be depressed, and to struggle with afflictive scenes; let us still adore thy wisdom, think of thee with reverence and honour, and acknowledge all the ways of thy providence to be *equal*, and *right*. With a composed and patient resignation, let us say, *Thy will be done*. Instead of murmuring at the ungrateful and undesirable scene, let us endeavour to improve it, and acquire, by means of it, greater refinement, firmness, and constancy of mind. When crosses and disappointments befall us, let us not be so ruffled and discomposed, as to be inattentive to the still voice of reason, and incapable of the solid supports and consolations of religion. Let not any of the adverse occurrences of life make us dejected, and desponding. Let us learn from them the *vanity* of the world, but neglect no part of our *duty* in it. Let us be quickened in our aspirings after, and preparations for, a happiness that is more exalted and durable,—more pure, independent, and divine. Let us be grave and serious under these humbling dispensations of thy providence, but not morose, peevish, and unsociable. From what we are called to suffer, may we acquire greater softness and tenderness of spirit towards all
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that are in distress, and a more warm and lively feeling of their miseries.

O GOD, thou hast been pleased in thy most gracious and adorable wisdom, to plant in us an ardent and unextinguishable desire of happiness, and strong instincts to pursue it: And we thank thee, for having so admirably adapted the constitution of our nature, to the chief and ultimate end of thy creation and moral government. But though we are thus taught, and strongly incited by thee, O GOD of nature and father of our reasonable and immortal spirits, to enquire, *who will shew us any good*, and, especially, who will direct us, to choose what is fittest and best for us upon the whole; yet as we are utterly unable to determine rightly for ourselves, as to outward appearances of good, and particularly states and circumstances of life, we most earnestly pray, *that we may never be allowed to enjoy any thing, that the world is most apt to admire, applaud, and envy, or that we ourselves may think to be in the highest degree desirable, if it would spoil our tempers, or corrupt our integrity.*—But when thou perceivest that this would be the effect, O GOD, *lift up the light of thy countenance upon us*, to irradiate and purge our minds: Look down in mercy on us thy frail and erring creatures, and either raise us to juster and wiser sentiments, or *disappoint* our fondest wishes; and dispose things so in the course of thy providence, that all our *endeavours*, to bring this most dreadful evil upon ourselves, may be entirely *defeated*. And if *adversity* be the school in which our virtues are most likely to grow and flourish, we pray for *that* to be our portion. We *would be nothing*, but what thou wouldst have us to be; *do every thing*, which thou wouldst have us to do; and *suffer whatever* thou thinkest fit we should suffer. We esteem ourselves highly honoured by being
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under thy protection, and having all our affairs over-ruled, ordered, and controuled by thy providence. While we move and act, in concurrence with thine unerring wisdom, we are sure, that we ourselves are, safe, and truly wise here, and, as the necessary consequence, shall be honourable and happy for ever.—To thee, O GOD *only wise, who art able to keep us from falling*, to lead us in the paths of truth and righteousness, and to deliver us finally from the dominion of error and vice, *to thee be glory in the churches*, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Devotions suited to the goodness of G O D.

O THOU eternal and inexhaustible fountain of mercy, whose nature is *love*, and *goodness* itself,—We desire to raise our minds to the highest pitch of purity and fervour, to stir up all our rational powers, and every ingenuous and grateful affection, implanted within us, in order to adore and magnify thee, for this supremely glorious perfection of thy nature; which renders thee infinitely amiable, and the joy of the whole intelligent creation. And while thine absolute eternity, omnipresence, and infinity astonish, thy mere irresistible power is dreadful, and thy strict justice has a severe and discouraging aspect, especially to guilty sinners, we can contemplate thine eternal and all-animating goodness, thy gracious and moderating justice, thine unbounded mercy, and almighty benevolence, with delightful wonder, veneration, and love.

GLORY *be to thee*, O LORD, who art always immutably disposed to dispense the *wisest*, and *fittest*, (which, to thine infinite understanding, must always be the same as *all possible*) good to the whole, and to every part of thy creation. All the scattered communications of good, that appear in the universe, all the varieties of excellence, all the ample provisions for happiness, all the discoveries of a generous and diffusive benevolence, which are dispersed among the beings that inhabit it—are derived from thee, and are indeed but a faint *shadow* of that boundless

perfection, which thou thyself possessest. And thou hast so fixed the universal frame of nature, that when it is not obstructed, but allowed to fulfil its appointed and regular course, it always tends to good upon the whole. The instincts of inferior creatures to tenderness, and beneficent offices, we justly adore as displays of *thy goodness*, O thou great creator of the world !

BUT, O LORD, as *thou art good to all, and thy tender mercies are over all thy works* ; so we are bound, in a peculiar manner, to praise thee for the singular care which thou wert pleased to express for the happiness of thy rational creation ; and, above all, for the wonderful acts of *thy loving-kindness and mercy to all the children of men*. We adore thee, not as *our* creator and father only, but as the *merciful father of all mankind* : Who hast magnified thy wisdom and goodness, in the curious frame and structure of our bodies, (in respect to which we acknowledge ourselves to be *fearfully and wonderfully made*,) but much more, in the sublime powers and faculties of our minds, formed after *thy* divine *image*—whereby we are rendered capable of the refined and exalted pleasures of religion, and virtue ; of the pleasures of society, benevolence, and friendship ; and capable of knowing, loving, serving, resembling, and for ever enjoying thee, the immutable fountain of life, and light, of perfection, glory, and blessedness !

WE likewise adore thee as our constant preserver, and unwearied bountiful benefactor, the GOD of our lives, and the author of all our happiness, to whose unmerited bounty we owe—any degree of health, which we enjoy in our bodies, the free and regular exercise of the inward powers and capacities of our minds, our plenty, peace, and liberty, our reputation, influence
and

and usefulness; and all the necessaries, conveniences, and comforts, which thy liberal hand has provided, to sweeten human life, and render our passage, through this state of discipline and trial, agreeable and easy to us. These clear testimonies of thy goodness, thou hast been pleased to afford us in the present state; to support and encourage our minds, while we are waiting for the fuller manifestations of it, in the glorious world above.

FOR, to our unspeakable joy and consolation, all nature proclaims thee, and thou hast been pleased to represent thyself to us, not as a GOD surrounded with inaccessible terrors, and breathing nothing but eternal vengeance and destruction to all who have been so unhappy as to deviate from the law and order of their being, into paths of vice, and extravagance; but as *one, to whom judgment is a strange work*, averse from thy stated unchangeable disposition, unless urged to it, by necessary maxims of wisdom and goodness; as one in whom fury resideth not, as slow to anger, and abundant in mercy——who dost commiserate our errors, art desirous that we should return from our backslidings, and ever ready to extend thy pardoning mercy, to thy frail degenerate creatures, upon their sincere repentance and reformation. And we desire to raise and refine our praises, (that they may, in some measure, be worthy to be joined to those of angels and archangels, and the innumerable glorious host of heaven) for the *unspeakable gift of thine only Son, to save thy people from their sins*: And that *thou art in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto thyself, not imputing unto penitent sinners, their trespasses*. *Who can sufficiently declare thy marvellous works of goodness and compassion, O GOD? Who can utter all thy praise?*

WHILE we enjoy all these innumerable and unmerited favours, the free gifts of thee, O munificent parent of good, let us not darken and distress our minds, by entertaining any dishonourable and ungrateful *suspitions* concerning thine infinite goodness. Let us not be insensible of the mercies, by which we are encompassed, enlivened, comforted, and redeemed from sin and misery. Let us not, from our ignorance of the views of providence in particular events, object against the whole administration of it; nor be so absurdly vain, and arrogant, as to pretend to substitute, in the room of any of the works, which thou, O GOD, hast wrought, a wiser and more effectual method of communicating the greatest good upon the whole. But may this part of thy divine character, which supplies universal life to the creation, diffuse its warmth, and quickening influences, throughout all mankind; exciting all to the highest refinement of their moral and social powers. Let it, according to its natural tendency, produce, in the virtuous, an increasing generous ardor and delight in doing good; a reformation of manners, in the degenerate; confidence of mercy, in the penitent; and calm resignation and hope, in the afflicted.

AND for ourselves, in particular, we most humbly pray, that a deep and efficacious sense of thy stupendous goodness may remain upon our hearts, and be a principle of constant and cheerful obedience to thy holy laws. May *we love* thee above all, as a being supremely excellent. Let not our love of thee be a gross and sensual affection, wholly proceeding from warm and lively spirits, and raptured passions; but pure and intellectual. Our understandings being fully enlightened, and established in just and worthy conceptions of thee, let us prefer thee to all other beings,
and

and center our supreme complacency in thee. And let the foundation of this high esteem, be not merely particular instances of favour and mercy conferred upon us, but the essential goodness of thy nature. Let us raise our love of, and delight in thee, into truly generous and disinterested dispositions, by chiefly fixing their ground in thine infinite benevolence; which always inclines thee, O universal parent, to administer impartial justice to all, *without respect of persons*, to communicate happiness, not to any *arbitrarily* distinguished and chosen to be favourites; but, in the most *equitable* and *fit proportions*, to the universe of thy rational creatures. But above all, O God, grant that we may be transformed into a *resemblance of thy mercy*. May we endeavour to transcend the character of merely righteous, and rise, above it, to that of good men, tender-hearted, sympathizing, and universally benevolent. May we be true lovers of our country, and the friends of all mankind. May our souls be so enlarged and diffused, as to comprehend, within the scope of their good wishes at least, all beings capable of happiness. May we imitate thee, *O father of mercies, and GOD of all comfort*, by relieving the distressed, instructing the ignorant, confirming the doubting and irresolute, and endeavour to remove, in all with whom we converse, needless fears and anxieties, by promoting worthy and amiable apprehensions of thee; that being free from all superstition, they may rejoice in thee as their *father*, at the same time that they prepare, with awful reverence to meet thee, as their omniscient and impartial *judge*.

O most gracious GOD, enable us to allay every uneasy ferment, and to subdue every turbulent and injurious passion; that, being inspired by thy divine spirit, we may abhor all malevolence and cruelty, all rancour and malice, all pride and oppression,

sion, and all desires of revenge. May we be disposed *to love our enemies, do good to those who hate and persecute us*, that we may prove ourselves to be the genuine *children of thee our heavenly father*; who dost good even to the evil, and the unthankful, who *causest thy sun to rise on the good, and on the bad, and sendest rain on the just, and on the unjust*. O GOD, thou art the father of the rational world, who didst form them all for happiness; and thou didst intend all inferior creatures, who are capable of pleasure and pain, for good upon the whole, adapted to their respective natures: We desire to concur with thee, in doing our utmost, to advance this great end of thy creation and providence. Do thou assist us in forming, and make us vigorous and unwearyed in executing, the most noble and extensive schemes of public, and private usefulness. May we strive, to the fullest extent of our power, to make all around us easy and happy. And as thou hast implanted, in us, natural and unextinguishable sympathies, and soft relentings of heart, at all appearances of evil and misery; may we always cherish this divine disposition, and esteem it our most worthy employment, and our most exalted pleasure, to banish, as much as in us lies, *vice*, and all *real evil*, out of the world. Animated by such a spirit as this, may we experience a constant source of dignity, and of refreshing joy and tranquility, within: And finding ourselves raised, and elevated, to a nearer resemblance of *thee*, may we be always prompted to ascend still higher, towards the perfection of our nature; till at last we shall be closely, and for ever, united to thee, *O thou GOD of love*, from whom all happiness flows: And to whom be rendered, by all beings endued with reason, all honour, obedience, and grateful service, both now, and for ever. *Amen.*

An universal prayer : Or a prayer for all ranks and conditions of men.

O GOD, thou hast made, of one blood, all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth——And as they are all thine off-spring, with respect to their reasonable and immortal part, and derived from one common parent by their earthly nature, thou hast evidently declared it to be thy design in their first formation, that they should consider themselves as one public community, governed by the same general laws, whose dependence is mutual, and their interest inseparable; and who are to be supported and nourished by a spirit of benevolence, and united zeal for the common good, diffused through all the parts. As, therefore, we are plainly taught by nature, and as it is a duty, which thou hast expressly enjoined upon us by revelation,——we would offer up *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, for all men.*

O THOU GOD of the spirits of all flesh, who wouldst have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, grant, we beseech thee, *that thy ways may be known upon earth, and thy saving health unto all nations.* May all mankind have their understandings, and their hearts united, in acknowledging, adoring, and humbly serving thee, *the only true and living GOD, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, as the only mediator between God and man.* Be pleased so to direct, and order, all the affairs of the world (in a manner consistent with thine infinite wisdom,
and

and with the established rules of thy government over intelligent and free creatures) that all hindrances to the introduction, and more complete establishment, of thy universal kingdom of purity and righteousness, may be speedily removed.

PUT an end, O blessed GOD, to the triumphs of tyranny and violence, throughout the earth; to the ambitious and destructive schemes of turbulent and ungodly princes; to the effusion of precious human blood, and to the unnatural devastations and calamities of war. Let *not nation rise up against nation, any more, but turn their swords into plough-shears, and their spears into pruning-hooks*, and learn to cultivate the arts of universal harmony and peace: That there may be no more *hurting and destroying* throughout all the nations, nor in all *thy holy mountain*; no more any violations of the natural, civil, or religious rights of mankind. But may a manly and christian spirit of free inquiry be every where encouraged and honoured; and all the attempts of weak and ignorant, or of interested and designing men, to corrupt true religion, and load it with incredible doctrines dishonourable to thy perfections, be fully detected, and exposed.

PUT a speedy end likewise, (if it be agreeable to thy will, and to the great schemes and purposes of thine universal providence) to all impositions upon conscience, and persecution for righteousness sake; and may integrity and virtue, may justice, liberty, and happiness, may *pure and undefiled religion before GOD, even the father*, and primitive christianity, in its native simplicity and glory, universally prevail. And that this blessed and desirable state of things may the sooner, and the more easily, take place, be pleased, O GOD, to put a stop to all *pagan idolatry*, and superstition. May the imposture of *Mabomet* be clearly discerned,

discerned, by all its professors to be a scheme that encourages excesses of lust, and ambition, and is therefore unworthy thine infinite purity and justice: And remove the prejudices of thine antient people the *Jews*, that they may be again restored to thy favour——That so, throughout *all the earth*, there may be but *one lord, and his name one*.

BUT as we are concerned for the purity of thy churches, and the honour of the true christian religion, we are bound more particularly and earnestly to pray, that thou wouldst utterly subvert the antichristian, *Romish* church, which thou hast permitted, for ages, to be an ungodly and wicked faction against the common rights of mankind. Discredit, and bring into everlasting contempt and detestation, all its monstrous innovations, its enormous pride and tyranny, its multitude of vain traditions, that make void thy holy commandments, its boundless superstitions, its trifling commutations for sin, its impious doctrines, the horrors of its inquisition for blood; by which she has been long filling up *the measure of her sins*, and preparing herself for *the day of vengeance*. Convert these degenerate savages, these enemies to humanity and mercy, if they still remain capable of any kind and soft impressions; if not, confound all their devices, and speedily *consume them with the spirit of thy mouth, and with the brightness of thy coming*.

AND, O GOD of truth and order, we pray for thy *reformed* churches, that they may renounce, more intirely, all *dominion over the faith and consciences* of their fellow-christians, and be brought nearer to *the truth as it is in Jesus*. Root up *every plant, which thou our heavenly father hast not planted*, and rectify every thing that is amiss, in doctrine, discipline, worship, and

practice, according to the standard of thy holy and infallible word.

WE pray, likewise, for all kingdoms, and public communities of men—that thou wouldst be pleased to favour all *good* societies with thy special protection, and crown them with prosperity and honour; and make use of all methods, that are agreeable to the plan of government, which thine infinite wisdom has established, for the reformation of such as are *corrupted* and *vicious*, that these likewise may enjoy the blessings of order, peace, and liberty, and become the objects of thy kind and favourable regard.

BUT above all (as we are by the strictest ties of duty bound) would we implore thy peculiar blessing for the kingdoms of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, to which we stand more immediately related. Refrain that profaneness and blasphemy, that disregard to thy providence, and to all public offices of religion; that selfishness, pride, and discord; that inconsideration, and levity; that unbounded vanity, luxury, and gross sensuality, which are prevalent in the midst of us; and which are a disgrace to, and tend to the utter ruin of, all civil societies. And pour out upon us the contrary spirit of wisdom and piety; of purity, of peace, and mutual harmony; of morality, and justice: Pour out upon us a spirit of humble repentance, and reformation, of all our *national* vices; a spirit of fervent prayer, and supplication, for thy mercy; that so thou, O great king, and governour among the nations, mayst be prevailed with to avert pestilence, and famine, earthquakes, wars, and all other thy desolating judgments from us, and that our iniquities may not terminate in our utter destruction. Grant, that all the inhabitants of these lands may have their

their hearts united in the fear of thine holy and awful name, in a joint pursuit of one common interest, and in brotherly love, and christian charity, one towards another.—That thou mayst delight to *dwell among us*, and to *do us good*; that thou mayst succeed and prosper all our public schemes and councils, so far as they are consistent with equity, and do not interfere with the rights of other nations, and the general good of mankind: And that our religion, and our liberties civil and sacred, under the auspicious care of thine over-ruling providence, may be transmitted down secure, and in their utmost perfection, to latest generations.

IN an especial manner we pray, that thou wouldst preserve, and bless, our sovereign lord king GEORGE, whom, in thine infinite wisdom, thou hast been pleased to set over us. Establish *his heart* in a humble, conscientious reverence of thee, (O thou *king of kings*, and *lord of lords*, and supreme ruler of princes) and *his throne in righteousness*. Continue to inspire him with a love of justice, a zeal for religion, and a generous concern for the welfare of the people, committed to his care. Defend him against all the evil designs of malevolent and seditious men, and give him victory over all his, and the nation's, enemies, both at home, and abroad. Let him *scatter the wicked with his eye*; and, *in his days, let the righteous flourish*, and let *there be abundance of peace*. Support him under the cares and inquietudes, to which thrones are subject; and give him magnanimity and fortitude, to bear up under the common misfortunes and calamities of human life, from which the greatest princes are not exempted. And may his reign over us be long, and glorious, and easy to himself, and happy to all his subjects, and to *Europe* in general.

BLESS, we beseech thee, his royal highness GEORGE Prince of *Wales*, the Princess dowager of *Wales*, the Duke, the Princesses, and all the royal family. May they know thee, *the God of their fathers*, and walk before thee with *an humble and obedient heart*. May they be adorned with all great and heroic qualities, with every amiable, christian, princely, and divine virtue; and, thereby, be fitted for those high and important services, for which thy providence may have designed them. May they be an honour to their illustrious stations, and eminent blessings to mankind.

O THOU sovereign dispenser of justice, from whom there is no appeal, preside in the High Court of Parliament. Over-rule their debates, and consultations, for the public welfare. Teach thou *our senators wisdom*: And may all the members of that great assembly be *men fearing thee, bating covetousness*, corruption, and all manner of *iniquity*. May they be directed to such measures, and pursue them with steadiness and unanimity, as shall establish the trade, and peace, and honour of this our native country, and the tranquility of other nations round about us, upon a solid and permanent foundation. And grant, that all inferior Magistrates may be a *terror to evil doers*, and a *praise to them that do well*. Let them honour the laws, by an exact observance of them themselves, and by an impartial administration of justice, to all without distinction. May they endeavour by their authority, and by their example, to suppress all flagrant vices and immoralities, and to promote an universal reformation of manners in the midst of us.

To that end, do thou prosper the ministration of the everlasting gospel of thy Son. May *thy ministers*, of all denominations, have *grace of thee to be found faithful*. Let them not *walk in craftiness*, nor *handle the word of GOD deceitfully*: Let them not *lord it over thine heritage*, but be *examples to the flock*. Let them *mind the things, that make for purity, and peace*, those essential things, *by which christians may edify one another*. And, by their means, may the ignorant be rightly instructed, in the momentous principles and duties of religion, sinners converted from the *error of their ways*, and thy people *built up* in faith, and peace, holiness, and comfort, unto *eternal life*.

AND, O most gracious GOD, that our prayers, like thy mercy, may extend to all ranks and conditions of men, we pray for all the sons and daughters of affliction; for all that are troubled and distressed, whether in mind, in body, or outward circumstances. Ease those that are in pain, restore the sick, strengthen those who labour under infirmities and decays of nature. Do thou from heaven, the habitation of thy glory and goodness, the *father of the fatherless*, and the *GOD and judge of the widow*, *bind up the broken in heart*, and *comfort those that mourn*. Support the aged, succour the tempted, satisfy the doubting, and supply *the poor with bread*. *Plead the cause* of the oppressed and persecuted; whom we would remember, with a generous sympathy, while we ourselves enjoy the invaluable privilege of worshipping thee, without restraint or terror, according to the light of our own minds, and the dictates and convictions of our own consciences. And grant, that one spirit of piety, purity and peace, and of benevolence, harmony, and happiness, may be diffused through thy whole reasonable creation.

AND

AND we pray that all mankind, especially, may aim, in their several stations, to be as useful as possible; and to communicate the most extensive and general good. Let openness of heart, and mutual confidence, and a delight in the prosperity of others, increase the happiness, and alleviate the cares of human life. Let all carefully avoid criminal artifice, and fraud, and practice strict justice and fidelity, in all its branches. Let not prejudice or pride tempt them; let not a misguided and headstrong zeal ever transport them to violate these holy and immutable obligations. Reduce, O GOD, all their appetites, all their affections and desires, to that calm temperature, and may they behave, in the various relations of life, with that equity and candour, that gentleness and goodness, that mutual respect and honour, as will best subserve the great ends, for which thou hast formed them for society here, and made them capable of more refined social affections, and more exalted social pleasures, in the future world——when they shall be joined to the *spirits of the just made perfect*, to an innumerable company of angels, to *Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*, and to thee, the everlasting Father and judge of all, in the highest dignity and perfection of their nature. Now to thee, the almighty creator, the continual preserver, and the merciful *saviour*, of *all men*, but especially of them that believe, be ascribed, through *Jesus Christ our Saviour* ^a, everlasting praise, and glory, love, obedience, and submission, as a homage due from all thy creatures. *Amen.*

^a Tit. iii. 4,—6.

A general prayer : Or a prayer for common occasions.

O MOST glorious and for ever blessed LORD our GOD, whose *kingdom ruleth over all : Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth from generation to generation.* We desire to prostrate our souls at the footstool of thy glorious throne, adoring thee as a being of transcendent and incomprehensible majesty, of absolute rectitude and perfection of nature, of spotless purity, of strict inflexible justice, of unerring and fathomless wisdom, of boundless uncontrollable power, of unlimited unchangable goodness, worthy to be praised, feared, and loved by all thine intelligent creatures. We desire, with the humblest reverence, to adore thee, as the great creator of *heaven and earth, and of all things visible, and invisible ;* who hast displayed thine infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, in the most illustrious and astonishing manner, in all thy works of creation : So that *the heavens declare thy glory, and the firmament sheweth thine handy-work ; the whole earth is full of abundant testimonies of thy loving kindness and mercy ;* and the minutest of *thy works praise thee.*

WE adore thee, likewise, as the supreme lord and governor of all things, whose sovereign and efficacious providence is over the whole universe ; conducting, and disposing, all events for the general good of thy creatures, and for the particular advantage of those who sincerely serve thee, and place their humble trust
and

and confidence in thy mercy. We most highly rejoice, that thou *the* LORD GOD *omnipotent*, most wise, most righteous, and most merciful, *reignest*. We rejoice in the propitioufness and clemency of thy government, in the reasonableness, equity, and purity of thy laws. We esteem it our high honour, and our inestimable privilege, that we have liberty to spread our wants, and difficulties before thee ; who art *able to do exceeding and abundantly for us, beyond all that* we are able either to ask or think, and art tenderly concerned for the happiness of all thy creatures. We refer ourselves, and the management of all our concerns, to thine unerring conduct, being solicitously *careful for nothing*, but *in every thing by prayer and supplication*, with fervent and devout thanksgivings, *making known our requests unto thee*. O everlasting father of mercies, O GOD and father of our lord Jesus Christ, incline a favourable ear to our supplications ; and *enter not into strict judgment with us, thine unrighteous and unworthy servants !*

WE have great reason, O GOD, with shame, and remorse, and the deepest contrition of soul, to confess before thee our manifold sins, and the heinous and aggravated provocations, which we have offered to thine heavenly majesty. We have offended against thee, our creator, and father, our supreme and most righteous governor, our constant benefactor, and the eternal fountain of good. We have violated thine holy laws, affronted thy sovereign authority, and abused thy tender mercies. We have, in many instances, acted unbecoming the dignity of our reasonable nature, as men, and unsuitably to our high character, and glorious hopes, as christians. We have *sinned against heaven, and before thee*, before thine omniscience, thy strict justice, thine absolute and immaculate purity, and are *not worthy to be called thy children*. But our hope and confidence is in thine infinite mercy, O GOD.
And

And to encourage this hope, thou hast proclaimed thy *name* (by which thou desirest, especially, to be known) to be the LORD, the LORD GOD, *abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin*; who, though thou wilt by no means clear the incorrigible guilty, yet desirest not that any one reasonable and immortal soul, which thou hast made, should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Be merciful unto us, O GOD, be merciful unto us according to thy loving-kindness, and, according to the multitude of thine essential and unchangable mercies, blot out all our transgressions.

AND that we may be completely qualified for thy pardoning grace, according to the general condition which thou hast fixed, (not arbitrarily, but because it is eternally *fit* and *necessary* in the reason of things) grant, that we may exercise most humble and unfeigned repentance, for all the errors of our past conduct: And wherein we have done amiss, enable us, by thy kind concurrence with our own sincere endeavours, to do so no more. Let us look upon all vice, and moral depravity, with aversion, and horror, as the stain and infamy of our reason, a contrariety to thy most perfect nature, and tending to introduce deformity, disorder, and misery into the moral world. Create in us, O GOD, pure hearts, and renew right spirits within us. Cast us not away from thy presence, and take not thine holy spirit from us. And to that end, we pray, that thou wouldst cleanse us from all our secret faults. Keep back thy servants also from wilful and presumptuous sins, that they may not have dominion over us, and, by degrees, entirely over-rule the authority of conscience, and root out our natural sense of good and evil. But being delivered from these fatal obstructions to an entire reformation of the temper of our minds, and of our outward manners, may the meditations of our hearts,

the words of our mouths, and the action of our lives, become from hence-forth, and to the end of this our probationary state, acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, our strength, our redeemer, and our judge!

AND, as the only just foundation of all religious duty and service, be pleased to grant, O GOD, that we may be careful, evermore, to maintain and cultivate exalted and honourable apprehensions of thy perfections, and providence, and, above all, just and worthy conceptions of thy moral character. May we *sanctify thee in our hearts*, and make thee the object of our supreme and habitual reverence and veneration; and *love thee with all our understandings, with all our minds, and with all our strength*, as the best and most amiable of all beings. And let it be our highest ambition, and what we esteem the chief honour, and *happiness*, of our intelligent nature, to resemble thee, — *to be holy, as thou art holy, merciful as thou art merciful, and perfect*, in proportion to the extent of our weak and limited powers, as thou, *our father, who art in heaven, art perfect*. O thou great ruler of the world, and disposer of all events, may we constantly acknowledge, that all thine orders and regulations are infinitely wise, and gracious, and, with entire composure, and calm resignation of mind, acquiesce in all the dispositions of thy providence—Being firmly perswaded, that, when the outward face of things is dark and disconsolate, and seems most entangled and confused to our deluded imaginations, or to our proud and discontented passions, that, even then, every thing is rightly conducted by thine invisible hand, and upon the strictest principles of wisdom, justice, and of paternal and invariable goodness.

AND

AND as thou hast, in the nature of things, inseparably connected religion with moral virtue, we most humbly pray, that we may faithfully discharge the duties we owe one to another, as well as the duties of piety, which more immediately relate to thee our GOD. Let us *love mercy*, and delight in doing good, as well as in *walking humbly before thee*. Let us practice impartial justice, strict inviolate fidelity, generous and diffusive benevolence, and exercise tender sympathy and compassion, towards all that are in distress. Let us *rejoice with those that rejoice*, and *weep with those that weep*; and *bear one another's burthens*, that so we may *fulfil the law of Christ*. Let us learn of him, to be gentle and condescending, *meek and lowly in heart*; and, in order to this, may we endeavour thoroughly to mortify pride, and rash anger, stubbornness and obstinacy of spirit, and root out of our natures, all the seeds of malice and revenge. May we be affable and obliging to all, and cultivate the sublime principles of universal goodness, and a love of all mankind; which no private prepossessions, no national animosities, no religious differences, can controul, or extinguish; that so, throughout the whole of our conduct, we may dignify our natures, and recommend religion; be lovely in ourselves, and agreeable and useful to others; and endeavour to the utmost of our capacities, to introduce universal peace, concord, and happiness.

AND that we may be the more effectually disposed, for performing the indispensable duties, which we owe to thee our GOD, and to our fellow-creatures, may we be strict in all the offices of self-government, and restrain all our affections and appetites within due bounds, that they may all remain in a state of strict subordination to the eternal law of reason, and the holy

gospel of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. May we be sober, and chaste, and *temperate in all things*, and keep our hearts with all diligence, because out of them are the issues of life ; remembering, that thine all-seeing and heart-searching eye, O most holy governor of mankind, is upon us, and that thou wilt bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

O LORD, who knowest our frame, and rememberest that we are but dust, have compassion on our frailty and infirmity, and suffer us not to be tempted, beyond what we are able to bear, that we may never remove our integrity from us, and that our hearts may not reproach us as long as we live ; but that this may be the constant matter of our rejoicing, even the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world. Let no difficulties ever discourage us, or break the force of our pious and holy resolutions. Let none of the allurements and vain pleasures of this world debase our minds, and taint and corrupt our innocence. Let us not, for the sake of such superficial, transitory, and unsatisfying trifles, forfeit our hope of immortality. But let the consciousness of our sincere endeavours to serve thee, and answer the end of our creation, support us under all the revolutions and changes, and under all the disappointments and calamities of life ; and fortify us against the anxieties and terrors of death : And, O God, in that awful day, when *the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, with all the works of it, shall be burnt up,*— And when thou, supreme over all, shalt by *Jesus Christ* render to every man according to his deeds, we may be able to lift up our heads before thee, with humble confidence and joy, and have

an entrance administered to us abundantly, into thine everlasting kingdom of glory.

O FATHER *of lights*, thou eternal fountain of wisdom, what we know not, teach thou us; what there is amiss in us, dispose us thoroughly to reform; what there is good in us, do thou help us to perfect. O GOD of infinite purity, deliver us from the dominion and tyranny of irregular lusts, from the darkening and enslaving power of corrupt and criminal prejudices, from the influence of vain customs, and the contagion of evil examples; that we may dare even to be singularly good, and in times of uncommon and general depravity, to stand up, though it were alone, for thine honour, O GOD, for the happiness of human nature, and for the sacred and immutable principles of true religion, and prepare us for all events of thy providence, that we may behave with honour to our reasonable frame, with honour to our christian profession, and to our particular characters and stations in life. Thus may we, by continually improving, under thine over-ruling guidance and direction, in generous and divine dispositions, and by a strict course of rational piety, of steady, persevering, chearful, and amiable virtue, *adorn the doctrine of GOD our Saviour*; and, having made the best preparation for our great change by death, and for the awful consequences of it, may we with serenity of mind, and peace of conscience, *look for thy mercy unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our LORD.*

AND NOW, O GOD, we resign ourselves to thy care and guidance. Defend us this day [*or night*] from the innumerable evils and dangers, to which we are exposed; prosper us in all our just, lawful, and honourable designs and undertakings; and
 may

may we acknowledge thee in all our ways. Direct us by thine unerring wisdom, defend us by thine almighty power, and provide for us by thy never failing goodness, while we are in this uncertain transitory life; and after death, we most humbly beseech thee, O God of our salvation and hope, to be our *inheritance, and exceeding great reward*, through *Jesus Christ* our Saviour, who hath taught us, when we pray, to address ourselves to thee, as.

OUR father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us, this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them, that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

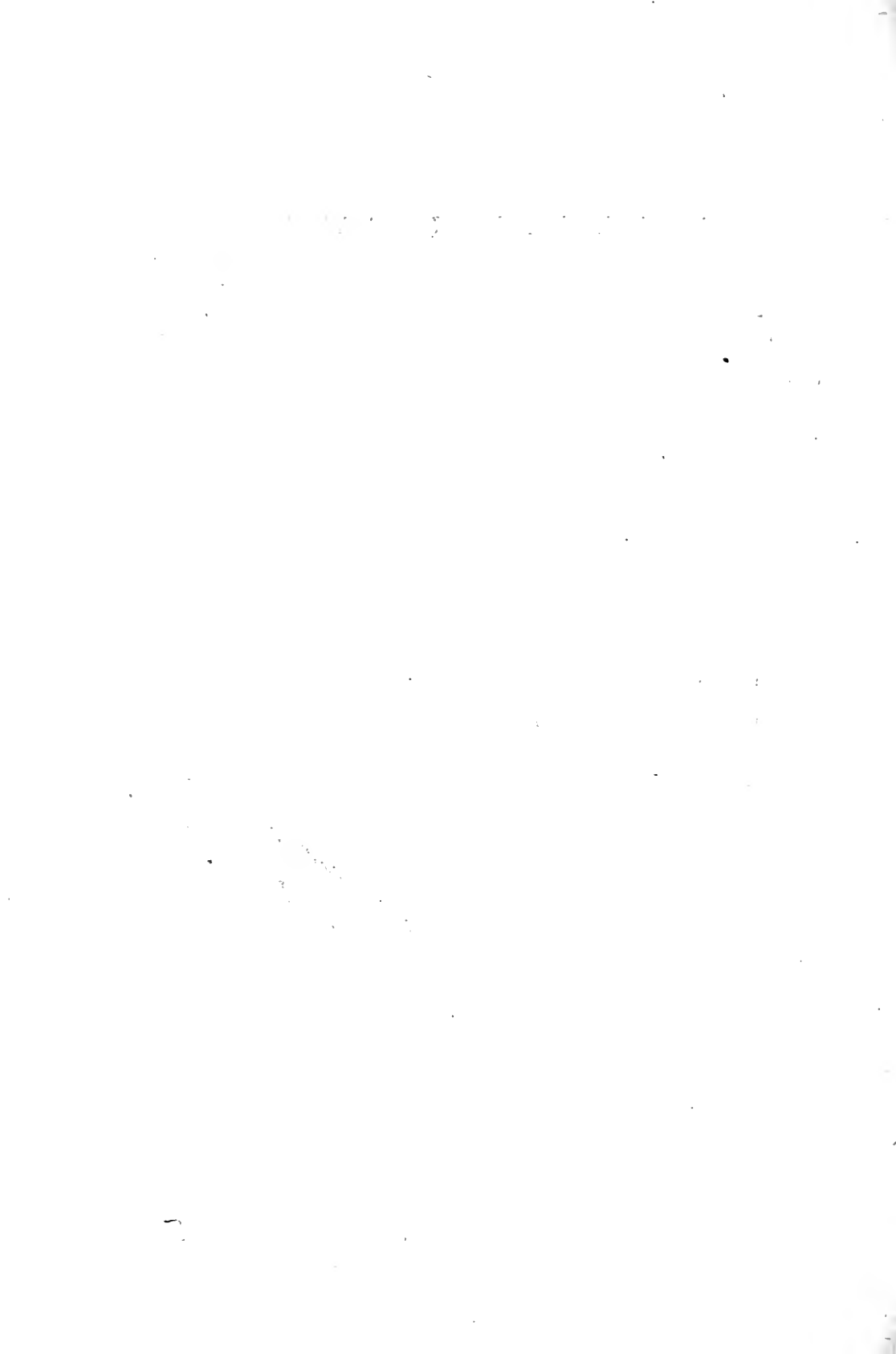
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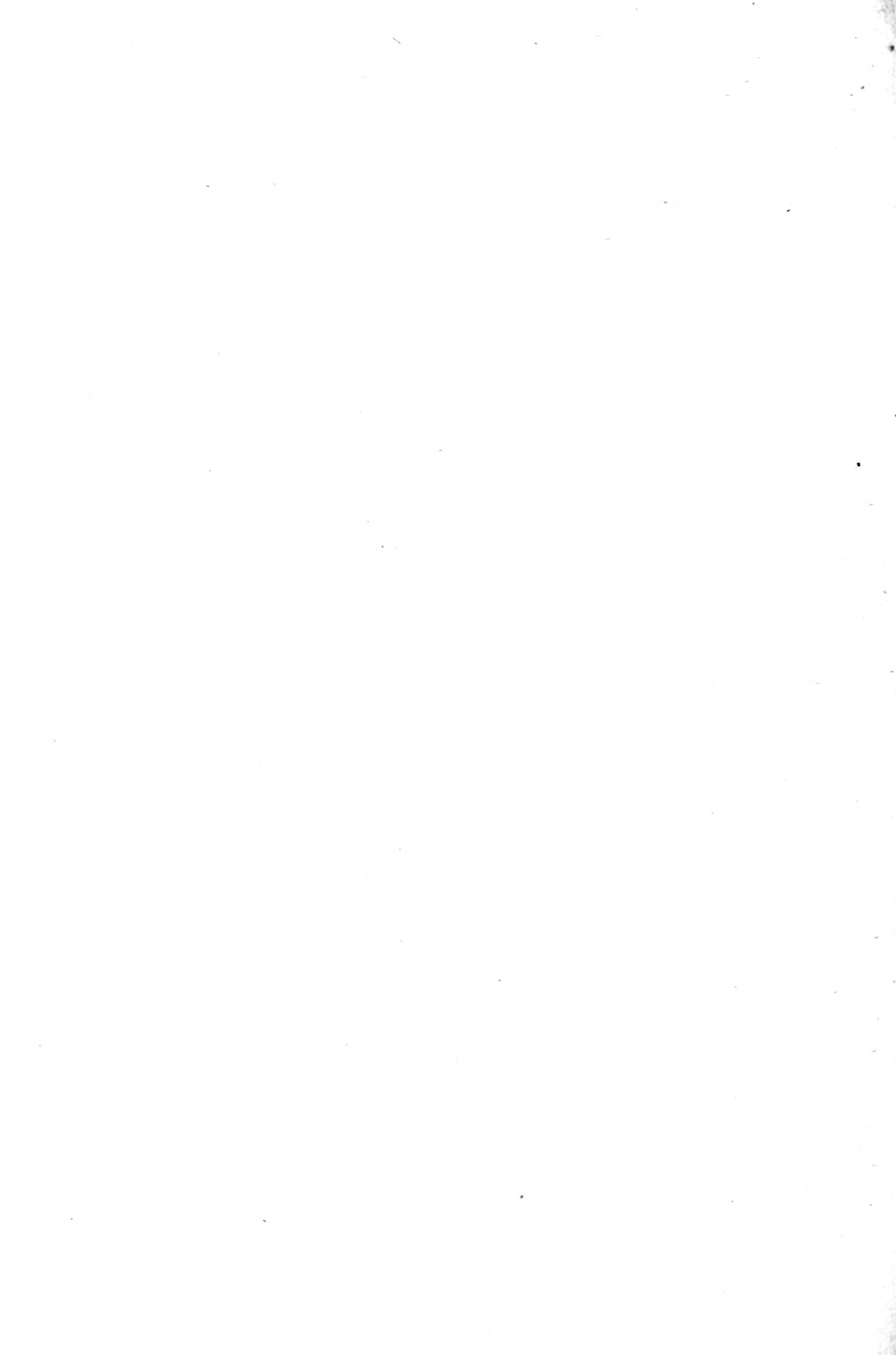
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Page	line
27.	22. for <i>atheist</i> , read <i>theist</i>
31.	24. f. <i>causality</i> , r. <i>casualty</i> .
94.	17. f. <i>mriads</i> , r. <i>myriads</i> .
ditto	24. f. <i>the</i> , r. <i>their</i> .
97.	16. f. <i>that</i> , r. <i>of</i> .
98.	the last, dele <i>and useful</i> .
126.	23. f. <i>expressibly</i> , r. <i>expressly</i> .
133.	16. f. <i>subsisting</i> , r. <i>substituting</i> .
261.	13. f. <i>canput</i> , r. <i>can put</i> .
278.	the last, f. <i>moralities</i> , r. <i>moral ties</i> .
292.	5. dele <i>not only</i> .
295.	20. f. <i>the</i> , r. <i>their</i> .
311.	11. f. <i>total</i> , r. <i>fatal</i> .
312.	5. f. <i>ing</i> , r. <i>rendeving</i> .
314.	6. f. <i>that regard</i> , r. <i>that any regard</i> .
315.	6. f. <i>errors</i> , r. <i>terrors</i> .
327.	23. f. <i>for</i> , r. <i>of</i> .
329.	20. f. <i>even</i> , r. <i>ever</i> .
366.	15. f. <i>next</i> , r. <i>text</i> .
371.	1. f. <i>unavailable</i> , r. <i>unavoidable</i> .
373.	11. f. <i>distinction</i> , r. <i>direction</i> .
376.	19. f. <i>faith</i> , r. <i>faint</i> .
390.	6. f. <i>vigorous</i> , r. <i>rigorous</i> .
391.	6. f. <i>and</i> , r. <i>is</i> .

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31.	6. for <i>all</i> , r. <i>and all</i> .
60	the last, f. <i>ordinance</i> , r. <i>ordinances</i> .
65.	7. f. <i>his</i> , r. <i>its</i> .
72.	15. f. <i>the</i> , r. <i>her</i> .
84.	1. f. <i>is</i> , r. <i>are</i> .
95.	27. f. <i>growth does</i> , r. <i>growth</i> ; dele
116.	9. f. <i>men, the</i> , r. <i>men, and the</i> .
122.	18. f. <i>parent</i> , r. <i>parents</i> .
144.	20. f. <i>if fathers</i> , r. <i>of fathers</i> .
154.	12. f. <i>wisdom deal</i> , r. <i>wisdom decree</i>
179.	18. f. <i>democritical</i> , r. <i>democratical</i> .
183.	19. f. <i>peferable</i> , r. <i>preferable</i> .
205.	1. f. <i>their</i> , r. <i>his</i> .
236.	16. f. <i>strongest</i> , r. <i>strongest</i> .
241.	27. f. <i>brought</i> , r. <i>bought</i> .
249.	the last, f. <i>incongruous</i> , r. <i>incongruous</i> .
250.	7. f. <i>that not its</i> , r. <i>that it is not concerned about its</i> .
275.	22. f. <i>joined</i> , r. <i>enjoined</i> .
ditto	24. dele <i>in relation</i> .
284.	17. f. <i>prevail</i> , r. <i>prevail</i> .
304.	21. f. <i>species</i> , r. <i>spices</i> .
332.	2. f. <i>men</i> , r. <i>man</i> .
342.	5. <i>the revolutions</i> , dele <i>the</i> .
345.	24. <i>more and generous</i> , dele <i>and</i> .
354.	23. f. <i>extend</i> , r. <i>extend</i> .
356.	7. f. <i>dist</i> , r. <i>dist</i> .
363.	7. f. <i>for ever, must</i> , r. <i>must for ever</i> .
365.	5. f. <i>arc</i> , r. <i>art</i> .
375.	9. f. <i>there full</i> , r. <i>there is full</i> .
377.	14. f. <i>particularly</i> , r. <i>particular</i> .







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