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THE
WORKS
OF
JOHN WITHERSPOON, D. D.

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PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON COLLEGE, IN NEW JERSEY.

CONTAINING
ESSAYS, SERMONS, &c.

ON
IMPORTANT SUBJECTS;

INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE AND ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINE OF
SALVATION BY GRACE, AND TO POINT OUT ITS
INFLUENCE ON HOLINESS OF LIFE.

TOGETHER WITH HIS
**LECTURES ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY,
ELOQUENCE AND DIVINITY;**
HIS SPEECHES IN THE AMERICAN CONGRESS;
AND MANY OTHER VALUABLE PIECES, NEVER BEFORE
PUBLISHED IN THIS COUNTRY.

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C O N T E N T S

OF

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LECTURES

ON

D I V I N I T Y.

LECTURE I.

IT is a very agreeable thing to see a number of young persons determined to apply themselves to the study of divinity. We must charitably hope that they are actuated by the noblest principles; that they are resolved to devote their life and talents to the service of Christ in the gospel. He is a good Master; his service is liberty. They have not any flattering prospect of an illustrious or opulent state; but they may have in that office the greatest inward consolation, and very commonly more serenity and peace, and as much of the real and desirable enjoyment of this life, as any class of men whatever.

It is altogether agreeable to the design of this institution, to have young men of piety and ability

fitted for the public services of the churches. This was the very point in view with the worthy founders of this seminary, some of whom are yet alive; and as there was never, perhaps, any seminary, the support of which was more the effect of faith and dependence upon God, so it is to be hoped that he will honour many of the youth brought up in it, with employment in his vineyard and success in his service.

If I may be allowed to say any thing personal, I incline to add, that it is peculiarly agreeable to me. Nothing would give me a higher pleasure, than being instrumental in furnishing the minds, and improving the talents of those who may hereafter be the ministers of the everlasting gospel. The hope of it is indeed the chief comfort in my present station. Notwithstanding the many encouraging circumstances that have happened since my arrival here, and the evident smiles of Providence upon the College, yet I confess I have often regretted the want of a pastoral charge. After having been for twenty-three years constantly employed in preaching the gospel to a numerous, obedient, and affectionate people, to be employed in a way of life so considerably different, must have created some uneasiness. Just figure to yourselves, one that had been so long accustomed to preach to a crowded audience of from twelve to fifteen hundred souls every day, and all subject to my private oversight and discipline; now to have such a thin and negligent assembly, and mostly composed of those who think themselves under no obligation to attend but when they please. In such a situation the sphere of use-

fulness seems to be greatly narrowed ; but if I am made instrumental in sending out faithful labourers into the harvest, it will be an ample recompense. For as one of great zeal and discernment expressed himself to me in Britain : “ You will be greatly mortified to see the difference between a small country society in America, and a large city congregation in Scotland ; but if you be instrumental in sending out ministers of the New Testament, it will be a still more important station, for every gownsmen is a legion.”

In this preliminary discourse, what I chiefly mean is to repeat, and endeavour to bring you to enter into the great and leading view which you ought to have in your studies, and which I desire to have still before my eyes in teaching. This may be expressed in one sentence : to unite together piety and literature—to shew their relation to, and their influence one upon another—and to guard against any thing that may tend to separate them, and set them in opposition one to another. This is of more consequence, and indeed of more difficulty than perhaps you will as yet be able to apprehend ; experience, however, has taught me to view it in a most important light. Some persons truly, and perhaps eminently pious, from an inward conviction that religion is better than all the learning in the world ; and perhaps observing that ill-principled persons, the more learning they have, are the more dangerous to the truth—have come to despise learning itself, as if the natural talent was to blame for the moral depravity. Of those who profess religion, some also, from a forward zeal, are impatient to begin

the ministry before they are fitted for the charge. Such persons are often quite insensible to the hurt they do to the interest of religion, and how much they injure the truths of God by their manner of handling them. On the other hand, there are some who promised very well in early life, but applying with vigour and success to their studies, became too much enamoured with human wisdom, and thought themselves such great scholars that they were too proud to be Christians. Intellectual pride is perhaps as dangerous a distemper as any we are liable to. I have often thought that great natural abilities, and great acquired knowledge, operate as a temptation, in a way similar to great wealth or external property; they are apt to intoxicate the mind, to produce self-sufficiency and contempt of others, and to take away from that humility which is the greatest beauty, or, if the expression be proper, the real glory of a Christian. I would therefore begin, by earnestly beseeching you to keep clear views of the importance both of piety and literature, and never suffer them to be divided. Piety, without literature, is but little profitable; and learning, without piety, is pernicious to others, and ruinous to the possessor. Religion is the grand concern to us all, as we are men; whatever be our calling and profession, the salvation of our souls is the one thing needful. It is however further, and essentially necessary for a minister. I do not mean that it is necessary to the being of a minister in the visible church, or to the efficacy of the ordinances of the gospel to those who receive them. This is, properly speaking, a Popish tenet, against which

there is a question in the Shorter Catechism expressly levelled: "How do the sacraments become effectual to salvation? The sacraments (and it must be equally true of every other ordinance) become effectual to salvation," &c. Some weak enthusiasts have gone into this mistake, and have said it is as impossible for an unconverted minister to convert a soul, as for a dead man to beget a living child. A similitude is no argument at all, properly speaking, but only an illustration, if the thing itself be just. In this case it is wholly misapplied; for it is neither the converted nor the unconverted minister that converts the soul, but the power of omnipotent grace, by any means that the God of grace sees proper to employ. But, on the other hand, this takes nothing away from the necessity of religion in a minister, when properly understood. It is certainly necessary, in the most absolute sense, to the faithful discharge of a minister's trust; and for the same reason, it is of the greatest importance to his success. True religion seems to give a man that knowledge which is proper for a minister to direct and turn into its proper channel the knowledge he may otherwise acquire. It seems necessary to make a minister active and diligent, upright and impartial, happy and successful.

On this subject I must give you the following particular advices.

I. Do not content yourselves barely with sound principles, much less turn religion into controversy, but seek for inward vital comfort, to know in whom you have believed, and endeavour after the greatest

strictness and tenderness of practice. When I desire you to look for inward vital comfort, I do not mean that you should wholly suspend your preparations for the ministry, or immediately lay aside thoughts of it, because you have not all that clearness and satisfaction concerning your own state, that you should both desire and endeavour to attain. There is hardly any principle so good, or any so clear, but it is within the reach of temptations, and capable of being perverted. Some being deeply convinced that it is a dreadful thing to preach an unknown Saviour, and not seeing reason to be wholly satisfied with themselves, have been thrown into doubts, and embarrassed with scruples, and have given up wholly that sacred office, to which they seemed both inclined and called; this seems to be taking a very unhappy, and a very blamable course. If such fears had excited them to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, they would have been properly improved. But laying aside the thoughts of the ministry only on this account, seems to carry in it a supposition, that they either do not intend, or do not hope ever to be better. It is certainly to the public a much greater calamity that there should be a bad minister, than a bad man of some other profession; but to the person himself, if he die in an unrenewed state, it will bring but little comfort. I would have you upon this subject to observe, that real Christians have very different degrees of comfort, and that if we examine the sacred oracles with care and accuracy, we shall find that what is termed assurance, is just the grace of hope in lively exercise. It is called the assurance of hope, Heb. vi. 2.

as well as elsewhere, and as every real believer has some degree of hope, which makes him rest and rely on Christ alone for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel, so perhaps there are not very many who have such a degree of steady and firm assurance as to exclude all doubting. I know there are some that have taken it up as a principle, and make assurance, even in this reflex sense, the essence of faith; but when it comes to experience, except the phraseology itself, I do not find they differ much from others.

I mentioned to you particularly, strictness and tenderness of practice. This is of the utmost moment, as the fruit and evidence of real religion. All principles are valuable but as they produce practice. But to explain strictness and tenderness of practice a little, observe, that the expression of tenderness is borrowed from that passage of Scripture found in 2 Kings xxii. 19. 2 Chron. iii. 4. where of Josiah it is said, "because thine heart was tender," &c.; it signifies a heart easily susceptible of conviction, and obedient to reproof. When this is applied to the carriage of one devoted to the service of the ministry, I think it implies, 1. The strictest watchfulness to discover sin and duty, and a disposition to obey the dictates of conscience with respect to both. 2. A concern to avoid, not only what is in itself directly and certainly sinful, but whatever is but doubtful, according to the apostolic doctrine, "he that doubteth," &c. 3. A willingness to abstain from lawful things, if liable to exception, or likely to be matter of offence.

II. A second advice I would give you upon this

subject is, that you should remember the importance of the exercises of piety, and the duties of the closet. As there are no forms of prayer with us, the habit of closet devotion is necessary to give a minister fullness, propriety, and fervency in prayer. This for his own sake also he should attend to; for it is necessary to the preservation and improvement of the spiritual life. Pray without ceasing, says the apostle; intimating that the very spirit and temper of a believer should be that of dependence upon God, and deriving by faith from him every necessary supply. In order to recommend it particularly to you, I would observe that it is peculiarly necessary to be begun in early life; perhaps there are few, if any instances of persons coming to a greater degree of fervour in devotion, or attention to the duty of it, in advanced years, than they had in youth. There are many particulars in which an aged, if a real Christian, will insensibly improve: he will improve in meekness and humility, in prudence and judgment, in attention to Providence, in purity of principle, in submission to the divine will; but fervour in devotion must be begun early, while the passions are strong, and continued by the power of reason and habit. Perhaps you may think it of small moment, yet some very judicious and experienced Christians have given it as a rule upon this subject, to be strictly punctual and regular in point of time, and even place.

III. Early fix, and study under the influence of those principles which should animate all your future labours, a concern for the glory of God, and love for the souls of men. If these are the princi-

ples of study, they will keep you from mistaking the way, and having taken early and deep root, they will bring forth fruit more abundantly in after life. Living by faith is extremely proper for cultivating these principles. Keeping the whole system of revealed truth in view, will shew its moment; and particularly what is revealed concerning the eternal condition of men, cannot fail to fill us with a concern for their welfare.

IV. Be diligent to acquire every necessary qualification, and yet study self-denial in the use of them. This is one of the most important, and, at the same time, one of the most difficult attainments. It is comparatively easy to avoid vain glory, if at the same time we indulge in sloth and negligence. But to meditate upon these things, to give ourselves wholly to them, for the glory of God and the good of souls, without having it in view to serve ourselves, this is real excellence, and here lies the greatest difficulty. Form yourselves to a true taste and real knowledge; let your capacity want no improvement that it may be more useful, but beware of studying only to shine.

V. Lastly, Guard against the temptation that is most incident to your state and situation, particularly making the exercises of piety and the ordinances of the gospel, matter of science and criticism, rather than the means of edification. When students begin to learn how things ought to be done, they are apt at all times to be passing their judgment of the manner, instead of improving the matter of public instruction; not that it is possible to be wholly inattentive to this, but let it not carry you so much

away, as to hinder your teaching others as humble Christians, as well as discoursing to them as able ministers.

LECTURE II.

LET us now consider learning as an important qualification of a minister. On this subject, after saying a few things on its moment, I shall endeavour to point out to you what branches of study it will be your interest to apply yourselves to with greatest diligence. As to the importance of learning, there being no reason for us in this age to expect immediate or supernatural revelation, the acquiring a proper measure of knowledge by study and application, is absolutely necessary. No parts or capacity are sufficient without this; nay, such is the wise order of Providence, that to improve a talent is to possess and secure it; to neglect it is to lose it. There is scarce any thing that a man could once do ever so well, but if he lay aside the practice he will lose the faculty. It is lamentable to think what a poor and contemptible figure some persons make in advanced life, who had good talents from nature, but suffered them to rust in sloth, or to be blunted by sensuality and self-indulgence. Learning is necessary to keep the sacred truths we are obliged to handle from contempt. Great weakness and insufficiency expose the ministry to contempt, even amongst the meanest of the people; but it is especially a stumbling block to those who are themselves persons of literature and taste. It is ex-

tremely difficult for them to receive and relish things delivered in a mean, slovenly manner. Suppose, for example, one who is not so much as sensible of the grossest improprieties of style, speaking in the hearing of persons of rank, or of real knowledge; and as even a good man is not always wholly free from vanity and affectation, suppose, too, that the speaker should swell his discourse with high and pompous phrases, or hard and out of the way scientific terms; only think how great would be the temptation to such persons as I have mentioned, to neglect what is good, from its being mixed with what they so justly despise. Learning is also necessary to repel the attacks of adversaries. The gospel has never been without enemies, from without and from within; and as it is usually by means of human learning that they make the attack, it is necessary that some should be ready to meet them, and able to unravel the subtilty with which they lie in wait to deceive. I have often thought that there was something very admirable in the choice our Saviour made of his first ministers, to assist us in adjusting our views upon this subject: for the more immediate manifestation of divine power, when the wise and great in the world were united against his truths, he chose twelve illiterate fishermen, which should teach us not to over-rate the wisdom of the wise; and lest in after ages we should be tempted to under-rate it, he chose one apostle, able and learned, and to him he gave the most signal success, so that he laboured more abundantly than them all, and was honoured to be the penman of a very considerable part of the code of the New Testament.

But let me now proceed to consider what branches of study it will be your interest to apply to with the greatest diligence; and if I am able to do this with propriety, I am persuaded you will find it of the most signal service. A traveller loses time upon his journey by going out of the road, as well as by standing still; and if his direction is very wrong, the time is more than lost, for his distance is increased, and his strength is exhausted. On this subject be pleased to attend to the following remarks. There is no branch of literature without its use. If it were possible for a minister to be acquainted with every branch of science, he would be more fit for public usefulness. The understanding which God hath given us, and every object that he hath presented to it, may be improved to his glory. A truly good man does grow both in holiness and usefulness, by every new discovery that is made to him; therefore learning in general is to be esteemed, acquired, and improved; and perhaps I may also say, it were therefore good if a minister were a person of extensive knowledge. But our time and capacity are both limited, and we cannot do all that we could wish. On the subject of literature in general, observe, that reading a few books well chosen, and digesting them thoroughly, together with the frequent exercise of reflection, will make a knowing and intelligent man; but to make what the world calls a learned man, or a great scholar, requires a very general knowledge of authors, books, and opinions of all kinds. A person of great discernment may perhaps observe a still nicer distinction, in the use of epithets in our own language. The phrase,

a man of learning, according to its present acceptation in Europe, almost always supposes and includes taste in the belles lettres. A great scholar, or a man of erudition, always carries in it the idea of much reading; the first always supposes genius, the other may consist with very moderate talents. A pretty large circle of the sciences is taught in our schools and colleges; and though many think it too extensive, yet something of the principles of the whole may be understood by a person of capacity and diligence; his knowledge may be true and just, though not minute. A man may not be a mathematician or an astronomer, and yet understand something of the true system of the universe. He may understand many sciences so far as to comprehend the reasoning of those more deeply skilled, who speak and write of them, and so as to speak with politeness and consistency within his own line, in every thing he says of them; but to excel in any particular branch of science, and to know every thing upon that branch that may be known, is the work of a lifetime. Grammar, mathematics, astronomy, oratory, history, law, physic, poetry, painting, statuary, architecture, music; nay, the subordinate divisions of some of these sciences, such as, anatomy, botany, chemistry, are all of them sufficient to employ a life to carry them to perfection. It is therefore plainly in itself improbable, that almost any man can attain a high degree of perfection in all, or indeed in many of these branches of study. There is even something more to be observed; the person who addict's himself to any one of those studies, so

as to be an adept, or really a complete master in it, cannot be a man of extensive knowledge, and it is but seldom that he can be a man of a liberal or noble turn of mind, because his time is consumed by the peculiarities, and his mind narrowed by attending to one particular art. He is likewise apt to esteem his favourite study so much, as to confine all excellence, and even all capacity to it. A profound botanist, smitten with the love of flowers and herbs, if he meets with a man that does not know one from another, and does not value a ranunculus or anezone more than a pile of common spear-grass, has a sovereign contempt of such an understanding. Dean Swift takes notice of a curious expression this way of a dancing-master, at whose school the famous Harley, Earl of Oxford, had been in his youth; when he was made Secretary of State, he said, he wondered what the Queen could see in that man, for he was one of the greatest dunces he ever taught.

Hence you may observe, that all who are devoted to the particular study of one small branch, are generally considered as pedants, and indeed commonly are such as are understood by that expression. Their thoughts have taken such a course, and their ideas themselves taken such a tincture from their favourite study, that they see every thing through that medium, and are apt to introduce the expressions belonging to it, upon every subject and occasion. Mr Addison, in one of his Spectators, observes, that every man whose knowledge is confined to one particular subject is a pedant, as a mere soldier, a mere actor, a mere merchant, &c. but that the learned

pedant, though generally most laughed at, is of all others the most tolerable, because he has generally something to communicate that is worth hearing. But I observe, that the most reasonable pedants, and the least to be blamed, are those whose whole hearts are set upon what is their business for life. Therefore, though a schoolmaster can scarcely speak without citing Virgil or Horace, he is to be indulged; and though he may not make the most distinguished figure in public or polite life, yet he is useful in his generation, and fit for the discharge of his trust. Therefore a minister that is a mere theologian, well acquainted with the Scriptures, though with few other books, or books upon other subjects, and is master of the controversies that belong to divinity, properly so called, is certainly much more to be pardoned, than one ever so much skilled in any other science without this. But what shall we say of those who mistake their duty so very much, as to be chiefly distinguished for that which they have least to do with? I have known a physician who was a much greater connoisseur in music than in medicine; and a divine, much more famous for accounts and calculation than for preaching. It is therefore, in my opinion, not any honour to a minister to be very famous in any branch that is wholly unconnected with theology; not that knowledge of any thing, properly speaking, is either a disadvantage or ground of reproach; but for a man to shew a deep knowledge of some particular subject, plainly discovers that he hath bestowed more time and pains upon it, than he had to spare from his necessary duty. It is also usual in all such cases, that the fa-

yourite pursuit infuses such a quantity of phrases and allusions into his language, as renders it stiff and improper, and sometimes ridiculous.

Agreeably to these remarks I observe, that the assistant studies to theology are chiefly the following: 1. Languages. 2. Moral Philosophy. 3. History, sacred and profane. 4. Eloquence, including the belles lettres study in general.

I. Languages. These, indeed, used to be reckoned essentially necessary to learning in general, immediately after the revival of learning in Europe: the Greek and Latin languages were studied universally, and with great care. All authors who expected their works should live any time, wrote in Latin; but since the cultivation of the languages of Europe, this has been gradually discontinued, and, except in some few scientific writings, has now wholly ceased. However, as the remains of the ancients are still the standard of taste, all literary persons should make themselves acquainted with the languages. It is to be lamented that many spend a great part of the time of their education in learning Latin and Greek, and yet few ever attain them to that perfection which alone can make the learning of a language of great moment, so that they can read the authors with pleasure and profit, for the matter which they contain. This might be easily attained by almost any student after his grammar-school and other education; and reading over the classics with some of the best critics upon them, would be a very improving study. Books of history and entertainment also, in Greek and Latin, would have a happy effect this way. The Hebrew language, also, is

very proper and useful for a divine, being the language in which a great part of the Scriptures were originally written, and not difficult to acquire, because we have but few writings in that language at all, and the language itself is not copious. To these I only add the study of the French language; it is both useful and ornamental. There is hardly any such thing as a learned education in Britain, where the French language is omitted. It was the first polished of all the modern languages of Europe, having been at least fifty years before the English in this respect; and though there are some branches of writing in which there are English authors not inferior to any of the French that I am acquainted with, yet, in general, there is to be found a greater purity, simplicity, and precision in the French authors, than in the English. But what indeed chiefly disposes me to recommend the French language to divines is, on account of the sound, calvinistic, reformation divinity. There are many more able and elegant writers in that language than in English; there are also some admirable practical treatises written by the Popish divines in French, as well as by the Jansenists of the Roman catholic communion. Jansenists and Molinists in the church of Rome, are just the same as Calists and Arminians among Protestants.

II. Moral Philosophy. The connection of this with divinity will be easily seen. It is a very pleasant and improving study in itself, or a good handmaid to the Christian morality; and the controversies upon that subject, which are all modern, stand

in immediate connection with the deistical controversies, which it is necessary for a divine to make himself master of. There are few of the ancient writers of much value upon that subject, excepting Plato among the Greeks, and Cicero among the Latins, especially the latter. The remains of Socrates, (to be collected from the writers of his country, but chiefly from Xenophon) the works of Epictetus, Marcus Antoninus, and Seneca, contain many moral sentiments, but little or nothing of the principles of morals. I think the most beautiful moral writer of the ancients, is the author of the *Tableture of Cebes*. As to any thing contained in the ancients relative to the truth of theology, it will be found almost universally collected in *Cudworth's Intellectual System*.

III. *History, sacred and profane.* This is a study easy, pleasant, and profitable; and, by a peculiar happiness of this age, fashionable. As a clergyman should be a man of liberal knowledge, and fit for the conversation and society of men of rank and letters, it is necessary that he be well acquainted with history; if he is not, he will be often ready to betray his ignorance before persons who should be much his inferiors in point of study. Besides, you see a great part of the sacred writings, both of the Old Testament and the New, consists of history; and few things are more necessary to the just and critical study of the Scriptures than an acquaintance with history, with the original state and gradual progress of human society. It adds greatly, too, to a minister's knowledge of the human heart; in that respect it may be said to be the way to that know-

ledge of the world which may be obtained at least expence, and with perfect safety.

IV. Lastly, Eloquence ; that is to say, composition and criticism, including the whole of what is commonly called the belles lettres study. Nothing is more plain than the necessity of this science. Public speaking is to be the chief, or one of the chief parts of a minister's business for life. I shall not enlarge on this, having occasion to speak on it at great length in another department, which you have had, or may have an opportunity to hear. I should have made more mention of books ; but as I have written, at the particular desire of some of the last year's scholars, a list of the principal and most valuable writers in every branch of science, it will be more complete, for any that desire it, to have copies of that list.



LECTURE III.

THE subject on which we are now to enter, is the truth of the Christian religion. I am sensible that every good man has a conviction of the truth of the gospel, from its power and efficacy upon his own heart, distinct from, and superior to all speculative reasoning. That deep and heart-felt sense of the corruption and weakness of our nature, and of the power of indwelling sin, which is inseparable from the reality of religion, and the perception of the admirable fitness of redemption by the cross to abase the pride of man, and to exalt the grace of God ; to give consolation to the sinner, while it changes the heart ; is highly satisfying to a confi-

derate, if at the same time a serious person; so that, for his own sake, he would pay but little regard to all the foolish cavils of men of corrupt minds. Nay, there is something more; the whole system of the gospel, as depending upon and having constant reference to the cross, is so contrary to the taste of a carnal mind, and so far from carrying in it any of the marks of human wisdom, that it is impossible to suppose it a cunningly devised fable, and therefore we may cordially embrace and rely upon it as the power of God unto salvation. One thing more I would say by way of introduction: that the custom of some ministers, of constantly entertaining their hearers with a refutation of infidel objections upon every subject, is not much to be commended. This seems to proceed upon a supposition, that a great part of their audience is inclined to infidelity. There are times and places when that is proper, I admit; but there are many others in which it is either quite unnecessary, or even hurtful, as tending to bring people acquainted with what would perhaps never otherwise have fallen in their way. It is however certain, that since, in modern times especially, this controversy has been greatly agitated, and indeed of late almost all other controversies have been dropped on account of it, or lost in it, a student of divinity should be well informed upon it. I will therefore endeavour to state it to you with as much distinctness as I am able, and as much brevity as its nature will admit. The subject must be taken up a little differently, as we suppose we have to do with different adversaries.—atheists and theists.

The controversy with the first perhaps it is un-

necessary to treat with much length, because it is not difficult, and because there are but few that plead the cause of infidelity upon this footing; yet some of the latest infidel writers, particularly David Hume, has raised such objections as seem chiefly to point this way. The boundless scepticism he has endeavoured to introduce, would weaken the belief we have in the Deity, as much as in the gospel; and, indeed, as he seldom attacks particulars, (except in the case of miracles) his enmity seems to be against religion in general, and not against the gospel. The same thing may be said of Voltaire, Helvetius, and other foreigners, though Voltaire deals very much in particular cavils, and of the most silly kind.

In the deistical controversy, what commonly leads the way, is the necessity of revelation in general. This is to be proved from the state of the heathen world before the coming of Christ. The chief circumstances to be taken notice of are, 1. Their gross ignorance. 2. Their absurd notions of God, as of human shape, with many passions, and the worst of vices. 3. Their impious and shocking rites, particularly human sacrifices. 4. Their polytheism and multiplicity of gods. 5. Their great immorality. It is to be particularly observed, that these things were not confined to the barbarous nations, but, if there was any difference, it was rather more eminently the case with those who were thought the most improved and civilized, the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. The first infidel writers in Europe, were chiefly employed in shewing the sufficiency of reason as a guide to man in his conduct; of whom

Lord Herbert of Cherburg was one of the most early, and one of the most eminent. Their way of arguing is very fallacious; for they avail themselves of that very improvement of reason which they owe to revelation, in order to shew revelation to be unnecessary. The sublime and noble conceptions of God as the Father of spirits, which, after they are discovered, can easily be shewn to be rational, are boasted of as the productions of unbiassed reason: but the fair way of deciding the question is to apply to those nations that wanted revelation; that is to say, the Jewish and Christian revelation, and there we shall see what reason, in the course of many ages, was able to do in fact. There is likewise more here than is commonly attended to; for there is the greatest probability, that the small measure of truth which was mixed with the heathen fables, was not the discovery of reason, but handed down by traditions. It is well known that the Egyptian theology, and their literature, whatever it was, was kept a secret, and was handed down from one to another by their priests, and it is as certain that the earliest Grecian philosophers never expected that they could, nor pretended that they had discovered any of their opinions by reason, but they travelled to Egypt and the eastern countries, and brought it home as information which they had received from the sages of those countries. This was the case of Thales in particular, and after him of Pythagoras. Several ingenious writers have endeavoured to shew, that the heathen mythology contains, in many respects, a partial and adulterated view of the Scripture history. See on this subject, Abbe Banier's

Mythology of the Ancients, with regard to the Greeks and Romans, and Abbe Pluche's History of the Heavens, with regard to the Egyptians.

But with respect to the necessity of revelation in general, what seems particularly decisive is, that by a fair examination of the matter, and the universal consent of all nations, men in a state of nature are chargeable with guilt. Whatever may be said, either of original sin or inherent pollution, it cannot be denied that there is much moral evil in the world. So true is this, that the history of the world is little else than the history of human guilt. They that would evade this, by saying men are only imperfect, do not observe that they are guilty of such crimes as are strongly condemned by their own reason and conscience. Now, whether there is any forgiveness of sin and place for repentance, and if at all, upon what terms, can never be determined but by an express revelation. This is implied in the nature of guilt. Guilt is a liableness to just punishment; now, whether God will remit a punishment which he may inflict with justice, must rest ultimately with himself, and no reasoning can decide upon it. Try it who will, every argument brought in favour of the remission, will militate against the justice of the punishment. This appears from the very language of persons disposed to such sentiments, for they cannot help saying, and indeed they have nothing else to say, but that it is probable, for it would be hard to suppose that every transgression should be punished with divine vengeance. But pray let us consider this way of speaking: where is the hardship? Is justice hard? On the contrary, it is glorious and

amiable. I confess it is difficult for us, sinful creatures, to confess, and still more difficult from the heart to believe, that every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come; it is, however, the necessary consequence, not of one, but of the whole system of Scripture truths. There you have in every page, the highest encomiums upon the mercy and compassion of God. These are all without meaning, and contrary to truth, if it would have been the least impeachment of the righteousness of God to have suffered the penalty to take place. Pardon, if the word is understood, must be free. Benignity and goodness to the innocent, is a part of the character of the Deity in natural religion, but mercy to the guilty belongs wholly to revelation. Accordingly it is upon this point that all the heathen religions have turned. Expiation seems to have been the great purpose of all religion, whether true or false. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" &c. The necessity of revelation was acknowledged by many of the heathens in their writings. Of these, the saying of Socrates to Alcibiades was a remarkable example; that it was reasonable to expect God would send one into the world, to deliver men from ignorance and error, and bring them to the knowledge of himself.

* *Alcibiad. vi. 6, 7.*

LECTURE IV.

On the Truth of the Christian Religion.

HAVING endeavoured to establish the truth of revelation in general, we come to the truth of the Christian religion in particular. The proofs of this are so many, and laid down so differently, according as the adversaries of the truth have shifted their ground, that it is impossible to enumerate them, and indeed not easy to class them. There is one introductory way of reasoning, which may be called comparative,—to reflect on the infinite difference between the Christian and all other pretended revelations. If the necessity of revelation has been properly and fully established, then comparisons between the several pretences to it seem to be just, and even conclusive. Now I think it does not admit of hesitation, that with respect to purity, consistency, sublimity, dignity, and every excellence which a manifestation of the true God must be supposed to have, the Christian religion is superior to every other. The heathen superstitions have not now so much as an advocate. Infidels do not now plead for Jupiter, Juno, Mars, and Apollo, but for the sufficiency of human reason; and, indeed, an age or two after the publication of the gospel, that whole corrupt system, which had been supported so long by ignorance and credulity, fell to the ground.

Passing from this detached and preliminary consideration, the proofs of the Christian religion are

very commonly divided into evidence *internal* and *external*. By the first of these we are to understand the excellency of the doctrine, as agreeable to the dictates of reason and conscience, and having a tendency to produce the happiest effects. Under this head also comes the character of the Founder of the Christian faith, and every thing connected with this or the former particular. By the external evidence, we are to understand the miracles wrought in attestation of the truth of the doctrine, the nature and subject of these miracles, the credibility of the witnesses, and every thing necessary to support this testimony. It is difficult, however, to collect the evidence under those heads, without often intermixing the one with the other. I have therefore thought the evidences of the truth of the Christian religion, might be as well divided in a different way. First, into two heads under the following titles: 1. Collateral, and, 2. Direct and positive proof. And again, to divide the collateral into two parts, and take the one of them before, and the other after the direct evidence, under the titles of *presumptive* and *consequential*.

I. Let us consider the presumptive evidences of the truth of the Christian religion, or those circumstances that recommend it to our esteem and love, and are of the nature of strong probabilities in its favour. These we may, for order sake, divide into such as relate, 1. To the doctrine taught. 2. The Person who is the Author and Subject of it. 3. The circumstances attending its publication, and other probabilities.

1. The doctrine taught. When this is considered

in the way of an argument for its actual truth, it rests upon this principle, that every doctrine that comes from God must be excellent; that therefore, if the doctrine did not appear of itself to be excellent, it would be rejected without further examination, because not worthy of God; and, on the contrary, that if it appears excellent, amiable, useful, it is some presumption that the claim of a divine original is just. It is a just reflection on Christ's doctrine, "Never man spake like this man," as well as the following, "No man can do the miracles that thou dost, except God be with him." Under this great head of excellence, or a doctrine worthy of God, may be considered separately—1. Its Sublimity. 2. Purity. 3. Efficacy. 4. Plainness. 5. Consistency.

1. Sublimity. The doctrines contained in Scripture concerning God, his works, and creatures, and his relation to them, is what must necessarily have the approbation of unprejudiced reason, and indeed is the most noble that can be conceived. His spiritual nature, infinitely removed from inactive matter, incapable of grossness, and of sensual indulgence. The unity of God, so contrary to the prevailing sentiments under heathenish darkness, yet how manifestly rational. Strange, indeed, that the whole world should have been in a mistake on this subject, and the Jews, a despised nation, in an obscure corner of Palestine, should alone have discovered and embraced it. The immensity of God, filling heaven and earth with his presence. His omnipotence, in creating all things by his word. His holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. To these we may add,

the constant influence of his providence, as the Lord of nature, the Witness and the Judge of all. Very beautifully the prophet says, "Can any of the vanities of the Gentiles cause rain?" so the apostle Paul, "Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness," &c. The moral government of God, as taught in Scripture, is exceedingly rational and satisfying, representing his great patience and long-suffering to be followed by a time of holy and righteous retribution. The mixture of good and evil that is plainly to be observed, is by this means clearly explained, and fully accounted for. On the sublimity of the Scripture doctrines, some are fond of dwelling upon the majesty of God, and the sublimity of the Scriptures in sentiment and language, as well as matter. Upon this part of the subject things have been said, and the controversy taken up on different footings. We have one adversary to religion, Lord Shaftesbury, who has been at much pains to vilify the Scriptures on the subject of style and composition, and to pretend, that if it were the work of inspired writers, it would be evidently, in its manner, superior to every human production. In answer to this pretence, there was a book written, Blackwall's Sacred Classics, comparing the Scriptures with the ancient writers, and shewing that there is not any blemish in writing to be found in the Scriptures, but may be justified by similar expressions in the most approved classics, and that there is no beauty in the classic authors, in which they are not outdone by the sacred penmen. This book, I think, is well worth reading by every scholar or divine. Dr Warburton has been pleased to

condemn this way of justifying the Scriptures, and even to affirm, that taste is a thing so local and variable, that it was a thing impossible to have any book designed for all mankind, to answer such an idea as Lord Shaftesbury seems to have formed; nay, he seems to deny that there is any such thing in nature as a permanent standard of taste and propriety in writing, but that there is one manner for the Oriental, and another for the Western writers, and that such have their excellencies, and no comparison can take place between them. I would not chuse to join wholly with either of these. It is, I think, plain, that it was not the design of the Scriptures to be a standard for eloquence, nor does it appear any way connected with the end of revealing divine truth; on the contrary, it seems to be the purpose of God, to bring us from glorying in human excellence. On the other hand, as I am persuaded there is a permanent standard of propriety and taste, so I am fully convinced, there are many examples of sublimity and majesty in the Scriptures, superior to any uninspired writings whatsoever.

2. The next thing to be observed of the doctrine is its purity; that is to say, having an evident tendency to promote holiness in all who believe and embrace it. That this is the design and tendency of the Christian doctrine, is very plain. It is its express purpose, to set sin and immorality in the most odious light, and not barely to recommend, but to shew the absolute necessity of holiness, in all manner of conversation. It is pretended by some infidel writers, that gravity and apparent sanctity is

the eſſence of impoſtors, and that all impoſtors do deliver a ſyſtem of good morals. But there is not only an excellence in the Chriſtian morals, but a manifeſt ſuperiority in them, to thoſe which are derived from any other ſource, and that in three reſpects: 1. That they are free from mixture, not only many things good, but nothing of a contrary kind. 2. That there are precepts in the Chriſtian morality, and thoſe of the moſt excellent kind, very little, if any thing reſembling which, is to be found in unſpired moralifts. The love of God; humility of mind; the forgivenefs of injuries; and the love of our enemies. The love of God may be inferred conſequentially, from many of the heathen writers; but it is no where ſtated with that propriety and fulneſs as the firſt obligation on the creature, as it is in the ſacred Scriptures. Humility of mind, as repreſented in the goſpel, is wholly peculiar to it. It is obſerved by ſome, that there is no word, neither in the Greek nor Latin languages, to ſignify it. *Humilitas* in Latin, from whence the Engliſh is derived, has a different meaning, and ſignifies *low* and *baſe*. *Manſuetudo animi* in Latin, and *Πεῖρα* in Greek, are the neareſt to it, but are far from being that; even the forgivenefs of injuries, and the love of our enemies, are rather contrary to the heathen virtue; and modern infidels have expreſsly pretended that the Chriſtian religion, by its precepts of humility, and meekneſs, and paſſive ſubmiſſion to injury, has baniſhed that heroifm and magnanimity which gives ſuch an air of dignity to the hiſtories of Greece and Rome. The third particular in which the Chriſtian morals exceed all

others, is the excellence of the principle from which they ought to flow. The law of God is not contracted into governing the outward conduct, but reaches to the very heart, and requires further, that our obedience should flow, not principally from a regard to our own happiness, far less to our own honour, but from a principle of subjection in the creature to the Creator, and a single eye to the glory of God.

3. The excellence of the Scripture doctrine appears from its efficacy. By this I mean the power it hath over the mind, and its actual influence in producing that holiness it recommends. There are several things that deserve consideration on the efficacy of the Scripture doctrine. 1. It contains the greatest and most powerful motives to duty, and the fittest to work on our hopes and fears. These, I confess, are much the same in general that always have been proposed as inducements to a moral conduct, yet they are opened with a fulness and force in the Scripture, no where else to be found. Eternity there makes a very awful appearance; particularly with respect to the gospel and the New Testament discoveries, we are told that life and immortality are brought to light by them. 2. It carries the greatest authority with it. The principles of duty are more clearly and fully enforced by the proper authority than any where else: the right of God, from creation, to the obedience and submission of his creatures; his additional title from continual beneficence; to which ought to be added, by Christians, the right acquired by redemption; to all which is further to be added, the divine nature it-

self, as our pattern. 3. The effectual assistance provided in the Scripture doctrine, to deliver us from the bondage of corruption, and bring us to the glorious liberty of the children of God. This is of more consequence than is commonly apprehended: despair of success breaks the powers of the mind, and takes away at once the will to attempt, and the power to perform, whereas effectual aid has just the opposite effect. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit, taking it singly in this view, is most happily calculated to animate men to diligence, and inspire them with courage and resolution, and seems generally to shew the efficacy of the Christian doctrine.

4. Another excellence of the Christian doctrine is plainness; it is level to all capacities, well fitted for all ranks, rich and poor, wise and unwise. It is given as one of the marks of the Messiah's coming, and is one of the glories of the gospel, that it is preached to the poor. Religion was plainly designed for all mankind, their interest in it is the same, therefore it must be plain and simple; whatever is otherwise, whatever system is built upon abstract reasoning, and is evidently above the comprehension of the vulgar, is, for that very reason, unfit for their service, and carries a mark of falsehood upon itself. There is even something more in the simplicity of the gospel, than barely the plainness of its truths and duties. It is from first to last founded upon facts still plainer. A great part of the inspired writings is history: the Old Testament is founded upon the fall of man, and is filled up with the history of Providence, or God's conduct to his chosen people; and the New Testament contains the birth,

life, and death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ. So material a part of the doctrine do these things comprise, that the character of the apostles is just that of being witnesses of Christ's resurrection. 5. The last excellence to be taken notice of in the Christian doctrine, is its consistency. This consistency may be viewed to advantage in two different lights: first, its consistency with itself. It is remarkable that the Christian revelation is not a single system that was, or might be supposed to be the occasional production of one man. It extends from the creation, downwards to the present moment, or rather, taking in the prophecies, to the last day and consummation of all things. It consists of several different revelations, and, particularly, two grand different dispensations of providence and grace. The one of these is perfectly consistent with, and suited to the other. It is not easy to suppose an impostor either willing to perform, or able to execute any thing of that kind. But when we consider the creation, and the fall of the Old Testament dispensation, and the prophets of the different and distant ages, conspiring to forward one great design, and the appearance of the long promised Saviour at the fulness of time so exactly corresponding to it, it takes away the possibility of a concert, and therefore the suspicions of an imposture. It is also consistent with the actual state of the world, in which we find two things very remarkable. 1. A great depravity and wickedness. Men may speak and write what they please, upon the beauty, excellence, and dignity of human nature, taking their ideas from the dictates of conscience, as to what we

ought to be. But it is beyond all controversy, that if we take mankind from the faithful records of history, and examine what they have been, we shall have no great reason to admire the beauty of the picture. What is the fame of the greatest heroes of antiquity? Is it not that either of conquerors or lawgivers? Conquerors give clear testimony to the wickedness of man, by filling the earth with blood, and shewing us what havock has been made, in all ages, of man by man. And what is it that lawgivers have done, but distinguished themselves by the best means of repelling violence, and restraining the ungoverned lusts and appetites of men. Now the Christian religion is the only one that gives a clear and consistent account of human depravity, and traces it to its very original source. This consistency of the doctrines of religion with the actual state of the world, and present condition of the nature of man, is very convincing in the way of collateral or presumptive proof. The other particular remarkable in the state of the world is, the universal prevalence of the offering of sacrifices; a thing found among all nations, and which continued till the coming of Christ. These sacrifices were a confession of guilt, for they were always considered as an expiation. But besides this, it does not appear how they could have occurred, even in that view, unless they had been at first a matter of revelation, and handed down to mankind by tradition, and carried with them in their dispersion over the whole world. It does not appear how any body could have imagined, that taking away the life of a beast should be any atonement for the sin of a man; much less does

it appear, how every body should have agreed in imagining that same thing. But if you take it in conjunction with the truths of the gospel, its agreement appears manifest, and its universal prevalence is easily accounted for. These sacrifices were instituted and ordained of God, as typical of the great propitiatory sacrifice to be offered in the fulness of time by Christ upon the cross.

LECTURE V.

II. **WE** proceed now to the second branch of this head, to consider the presumptive proof of the truth of the Christian religion, arising from the Person who is the Founder of it. He is indeed not only the Founder of it, but the Subject of it; for the whole may be said to relate to his person and undertaking. For order sake, let us here consider separately—1. His character. 2. His situation and hopes. 3. The spirit of his religion. 4. The measures he took to promote it.

1. His character. This, as painted in the gospels, in their simple, unaffected, and therefore probably genuine narratives, is truly admirable—the most meek and gentle, the most tender-hearted, the most truly benevolent, and active without ostentation, and the whole crowned and illustrated by fortitude and patience, and the most unconditional subjection to divine Providence. It is unnecessary to go through, at length, the various excellencies that adorned the man Christ Jesus. Those who are acquainted with the gospel history, will see the beauty

and propriety of the apostle John's expression, 1st chapter of his gospel, and 14th verse, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." It is not improper to adduce here the evangelists' authorities, because they were his disciples, and may be supposed interested parties; for they are the only witnesses from whom we can expect a testimony upon this subject. And considering them as employed in giving a full account of his character and life, however they might be supposed to disguise or add, they could not wholly conceal a character fundamentally wrong; and as there are more of them than one, it would have been impossible for them to have avoided inconsistencies and clashing, if they had not kept to the truth in point of fact, at least, if not of character; and indeed their whole histories are facts without any laboured encomiums, which carry the clearest internal marks of sincerity of any histories extant among men.

There seems not only no design to embellish their Master's character, but none to conceal the defects of their own. It is from the partizans of Mohammed only, and what they have recited of his history, including his own writings, that we learn his avarice, pride, and lust. Add to this, that indifferent writers among the heathens have spoken to the praise of Jesus. I am sensible, however, and think it best to inform you, that several of the writings taken notice of by some of the ancient fathers, are probably spurious, as the letters from Agbarus, king of Edessa, to Christ, and the letter in answer to it from Christ to him. Eusebius tells the story of Agbarus having heard of Christ's fame, and send-

ing to him to come and cure him. Eusebius in this case seems really to have given credit to it, on the memorials presented to him by the church of Edeffa. But the language given to Agbarus is too like that of a Christian, and the answer of Jesus Christ is misquoting, as well as misinterpreting Scripture. See Dupin's Ecclesiastical History. The letters said to be from the Virgin Mary, are evident forgeries of a late date. The letter said to be from Pilate to Tiberius, is not so universally acknowledged to be false. Bishop Pearson has largely and learnedly defended it, and it is very possible there might be some account sent from Pilate to Rome at the time of Christ's crucifixion, even though the letter now to be seen should not be genuine. There is also a passage of Josephus, and in all the manuscripts of that author, very favourable to the character of Christ. However, without going further into these, the very silence of Josephus, who is known to have been an enemy to the Christian faith, is an evidence that he had nothing to object against the character of Christ, as he certainly would have done it willingly, and in the history of the Jews had so fair an opportunity. The character, then, of Christ, was not only blameless but amiable. This is certainly a considerable presumption in his favour. His credentials deserve to be considered with care, and his pretensions to be weighed with impartiality; nor ought it to be forgotten here, that his own sincerity was proven in the most unquestionable manner. He sealed his testimony with his blood. That he was tried, condemned, and crucified for his pretensions, is abso-

lutely certain. This is one of the most important facts in the history of the gospel, and it does not admit of any doubt, for his enemies reproach him with it, and his friends affirm and glory in it. We may depend upon it, therefore, that he was sincere. He would never forfeit all that could be dear on earth, and suffer an ignominious death, for what he knew to be false.

2. Let us next consider his situation and hopes. In any great and hazardous undertaking, especially in an imposture, there must be some possible or probable way of accounting for the motives of the deceiver. In this case there is nothing that can lead us to suppose, or that can well admit the supposition, of his contriving a cunningly devised fable. He was of that rank in life which could not readily inspire that resolution; he was of that sort of education that could not fit him for carrying it into practice, or give the least probable hopes of success, if he should attempt it. When his enemies, as they all did at first, called him the carpenter, and the carpenter's son, they did not observe the force of that, when impartially considered. One of no higher capacity and instruction, could neither be supposed fit to conceive or execute so noble a design. Could he, supposing him a mere man, in that sphere of life, have the least expectation of prevailing over the power and wisdom of the world combined against him? Whoever weighs this with impartiality, will find it very satisfying and convincing to the mind.

3. It receives, however, great additional force from the next particular, viz. the spirit of his religion, and that scheme of doctrine and system of duty

which he promulgated and supported. It was directly opposed, in the first place, to the prejudices of the Jews. Could we even suppose, which is otherwise so difficult, that all the preparatory dispensations, and the whole concordant succession of Jewish prophets, and the general persuasion of the Jews and the eastern part of the world (testified by the heathen historians) that a great prince was to come from that country, and lay the foundation of a lasting dominion, happened by chance. Could we next suppose, that a cunning impostor, finding things in this situation, was willing to take the advantage of it, and pass himself upon the world for the expected prince; he would no doubt have formed his plan upon the views which the Jews had, and must have founded his hope of success entirely upon this circumstance. They expected a temporal prince, and he came an humble teacher, and suffering Saviour. By this means he had not only the dispositions of the corrupt, but the prejudices of the best part of his countrymen to oppose. What a strange scheme of human contrivance! He had no reason to think he could convince men, and he taught that it was unlawful to force them. This reasoning is supported by experience. In fact, during the period from Christ's death to the destruction of Jerusalem, there were many impostors who made their appearance, and they every one took the measures I have described above. The Jews expected a mighty conqueror, and they always appeared at the head of a band of fighting men. Every impostor would act the same part in a similar case. Again, as his plan was opposed to the prejudices of the Jews, so indeed

it was opposed to the prejudices of human nature. The cross of Christ was foolishness to the Greeks, as well as a stumbling-block to the Jews. The humility and self-denial of the gospel, and the precepts of passive submission, as well as the distinct account our Saviour gives to his disciples, of the opposition and suffering they must expect, had nothing in them alluring to the world in general, and did not seem at all calculated to draw away disciples after him. When I say this, I am very sensible that moral precepts, in some degree, must sanctify even an imposture itself. If any man were to pretend a divine mission, and teach gross immorality, he would be despised and disbelieved, even by immoral men. But a contrived religion, that the contriver wishes to succeed, must be accommodated to human taste. Whereas, like the religion of Christ, true religion has been, is, and always will be contrary to the spirit of the world. I shall just add, that the Founder of the Christian faith did not contrive his religion, supposing it ever so successful, in such a way as to bring honour or profit to himself, or those who should be afterwards concerned in the administration of it. Instead of preaching up form and ceremony, stately temples, and costly sacrifices, he preached them down, and shewed that they were vain when considered in themselves, and only valuable as types and shadows; so that they were to cease after his appearance. Instead of exalting his priests and ministers, he makes them servants of all. This reflection upon pure religion and undefiled, as delivered by our Saviour himself, will appear to have great force if you consider, that it is from this

very quarter that all the corruptions of Christianity in the following ages took their rise; they proceeded from that love of pomp and power, and the influence of that worldly spirit which he took so much pains to restrain.

4. Let us consider what measures he fell upon to procure a favourable reception to his doctrine. He called and employed twelve poor illiterate fishermen, no way qualified for such an undertaking.

On this part of the subject it has been often shewn, with great force of reason, that if the gospel were a fable, the apostles, who bore so great a part in its first publication, must have been impostors or enthusiasts, deceivers or deceived. Both these points have been laboured by several eminent writers, and it has been shewn, that they could not be either the one or the other. Not deceivers, because they had not the least temptation to it. There was not only nothing to gain by it, but they were obliged to suffer the loss of all things for their adherence to the Saviour. Poverty they must and did suffer during his life-time; and though, during a great part of his personal ministry, they had the favour of the people, yet about the time, and ever after his crucifixion, when the apostles came to appear upon the scene, continual reproach and universal scorn was their portion. The truth is, they seem to have been forced into the service, for a mixture of fear and unbelief made them all forsake him and fly, when he came to his last conflict. Neither could they be enthusiasts, and themselves under the power of delusion, for many reasons. Their Master was well

known to them, living with them in a state of the most intimate familiarity. It was not to a single fact that they bore testimony, but to a whole character and life. His miracles also were all plain and public, and of such a nature as that the deceit must have been easily perceived. But there is another circumstance more powerful than any other; he professed to endow these his disciples with a power of working miracles themselves. Now certainly in this they could not be deceived. A man may, by great flight and address, make me believe he does a thing that he cannot do; but to make me believe that I myself, through my whole life, and at a distance from him, and even after his death, can, and do perform many things, which yet I do not, is plainly more than improbable, it is literally impossible. So just are these remarks, that in fact even the disciples of Christ themselves, appear so far from having laid any scheme of delusion, that they appear plainly at first to have been under the same prejudices with the rest of the Jews. They seem evidently to have expected him to appear as a temporal prince and conqueror; and probably their hopes of honour and offices in the kingdom which he was to establish, contributed at first, in part, to their yielding to the evidence of his divine power. This seems to have been the import of the request of the mother of James and John, "Lord, grant that these my two sons may sit," &c. as also it seems to have been the meaning of this question put to him by his disciples in general, Acts i. 6. "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" If this was the case, can any person believe

they were deceived? Would not the disappointment of their carnal expectations have provoked them to forsake him, if they had not been brought under the power of inward conviction from what they saw and heard?

It is proper to remark here upon the measures he took to procure reception to his doctrine, that he framed his religion totally different in kind, and in principle, from all the heathen religions.

They differed from one another in the objects of their worship, and in their several rites, but they were all supposed to be consistent. There were in different countries, and even cities, different gods, and different ways of worship; perhaps also different families had various household gods in one city, but they were not supposed to be destructive of each other's divinity; so that it was easy to introduce the worship of a deity into any place in which it had not been before. It was remarked of Athens by an ancient writer, because of its readiness to adopt the worship of every divinity, that it was hospitable to the gods. But Christ, on the contrary, in his religion equally opposed them all, declaring that the gods made with hands which the Gentiles worshipped, were no gods. This was highly consonant to reason, because no lie is of the truth; yet it would have been highly impolitic in an impostor, and indeed would not readily have occurred to an impostor. It is remarkable that Lord Shaftesbury has attacked the Christian religion on this very head: he commends the heathen religion as of a sociable nature, whereas the Christian is abhorrent from all others. This shews how much the greatest men

may be made silly by prejudices; for nothing can be plainer, than that whatever is according to truth, must be opposite to every falsehood. When we put all these things together, with the enlargements of which they are capable, and which will probably occur to most of you in hearing, they seem to take away all possibility of supposing the gospel to be the product of an impostor.

3. The third general head of presumptive evidence, contains the circumstances attending the publication of the gospel. Many of these are worthy of observation, and we shall find that, taking them singly or collectively, they are in general such as, supposing the gospel to be true, greatly illustrate the wisdom of God in the choice of them; but on the other supposition, they were the most unfavourable for procuring a reception, and causing success to an impostor. The time of Christ's appearance is called in Scripture, the fulness of time. This indeed may be understood as only meaning the appointed time—that which had been fixed by the ancient prophecies. There are, however, many other respects, in which it may be called the fulness of time. The ignorance and wickedness of the world had come to a full height. The remains of tradition for many ages continued to have some effect, but were by this time wholly obliterated by the inventions of men.

There had also been full time to try every other method of reformation, so that the intervention of divine providence, according to the testimony of several heathen writers, was become necessary. Whoever will look into the reasoning of Cicero, "De

natura Deorum," and his other moral or theological disputations, will have a very clear and full conviction, how much men of the finest genius and greatest penetration, were bewildered upon the subject of religion. This very thing, indeed, has been recommended by some judicious persons for a man to satisfy himself of the necessity of revelation in general; and if this is fully done, the acceptance of the Christian religion follows as a speedy consequence.

We may also take notice, that the world in general, at the time of Christ's appearance, was fitted in a manner it never had been before, for spreading the knowledge of the truth with the greatest facility and speed. The Roman empire, which had risen gradually, was then extended in a manner over the whole known world. Before that time, the immense number of small, independent, and commonly hostile states, rendered mutual access and intercourse far more difficult. It is true, before this the Assyrian and Persian monarchies were of considerable extent, but neither comparable to this, nor of any long duration. But now the nations being united under one head, it was easy to carry the tidings of salvation to the most distant corners. Add to this the favourable circumstance, that there was peace over all the world at the time of Christ's birth; a fit emblem of his character who was the Prince of Peace. It was also designed for another purpose, that there might be easy access and opportunity to the apostles to fulfil their commission, Mark xvi. 15. "Go ye into all the world," &c. The event fully corresponded to this preparation for it in providence; for it is incredible to think with what ra-

pidity the apostles carried the name of Christ through the world, and how early the gospel was preached to the most distant nations. It is also observable, that when this purpose had been served by it, the power and greatness of the Romans came to an end. As soon as the church was planted in different corners of the Roman empire, that vast body, which had long been growing to such an enormous bulk, was first rent into two parts, and then broken into innumerable smaller divisions. Take it therefore as a great design of Providence—the time and circumstances appear admirably to illustrate it. But, on the other hand, what probability could there be, that a handful of illiterate mechanics should be able to overthrow the whole system of heathen theology, that had continued so long and spread so wide; that they should think of doing this, in opposition to the power of princes, the learning of philosophers, the interested policy of priests, and the rage and enthusiasm of a deluded people! Strange, indeed, that these successful agents should come even from an obscure corner, and from a nation that was, of all others, not merely despised, but execrated and abhorred; that they should, notwithstanding, succeed by preaching the divinity of a crucified man, a fact that carried in it the highest idea of baseness and ignominy. Finally, that they should do this without the parade or form of worship to engage attention; without secrets or mysteries to excite veneration; but by the simplicity of that truth which the worldly man despises, and the strictness of that law which the sinner hates.

LECTURE VI.

WE now come to the principal and direct evidence for the truth of the Christian religion. This is of such a nature as to be in itself full and conclusive; so that if the facts alluded to be true, the consequence is necessary and unavoidable. Presumptive evidence is sometimes of such a nature, and carried so far by the concurrence of circumstances, as to produce even a clear and full conviction; yet it differs in its kind from the direct conclusive proof. A few circumstances of probability do but little, they gradually rise in strength by an addition to their number; but a direct proof, though single, if just, satisfies the mind. In this view, the proof of the truth of the Christian religion is the working of miracles. A supernatural power is the seal or sanction of a supernatural commission. Perhaps, however, as the Christian religion is the completion of one great system, which began to take place from the very fall of man, was gradually opened in succeeding ages, and perfected by the incarnation of the Son of God, we may divide even this single proof into two parts, the one consisting of the fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the other of the miracles performed by our Lord in the days of his flesh. These ultimately rest upon the same principle, for the foreseeing and the foretelling of events future and distant, is as real a miracle, and perhaps as fully satisfying to the mind, as any other whatever. But before entering upon these two

separate branches, it will be best to begin with what is common to both, and consider, 1. What is a miracle. 2. What is its proper import in confirmation of a doctrine, and the force of the proof.

I. Then, let us consider the question, What is a miracle? Some say it is a reversing, altering, or suspending the course of nature, or its ordinary or general laws. Some say it is doing what is above the power of a creature or a finite being. And some, that it is doing what is demonstrably above the power of the immediate agent. As to the first of these I would observe, that reversing, altering, or suspending the course of nature, is certainly a miracle; but the definition is not sufficiently comprehensive, because every miracle is not of that kind. The predicting the recovery of a person in sickness with special circumstances, as in the case of Hezekiah, or discovering a knowledge of things distant, as in the case of what our Saviour said to Nathanael, are as clearly and evidently miracles, as any dominion over nature; besides, it is not always in our power to say, whether there is any controul or alteration of the laws of nature or not, as when our Saviour spoke to the winds and the sea, and immediately there was a great calm. A sudden calm might have happened in the course of things, and yet its following at that instant carried such a conviction with it, that the beholders immediately and justly said, "Behold what manner of man is this," &c.

Against miracles, under this view of controuling the course of nature, Lord Shaftesbury, with his usual vivacity, and, at the same time, with his usual prejudice and partiality, has objected thus: "Strange,"

says he, "to make the altering the course of nature a mark of the Divinity, when this is not so convincing and satisfying a proof of the being and perfections of God, as the order and regularity of the course of nature." But nothing can be more equivocal, and indeed disingenuous, than this manner of speaking; for as the first constitution and constant preservation of the frame of nature, is a proof of the wisdom and power of its Maker, so an express visible interposition in his own work, at his own time, and for his own great purposes, is certainly a most convincing proof of his power and presence. I shew my power in my family, by altering, as well as giving my commands; and my property in my ground, by cutting down a tree, when I have use for it in other service, as well as by planting it, or pruning it.

The second definition of a miracle is, that it is doing what is above the power of any finite being, and therefore shews itself to be the finger of God. This, though very often adopted by writers, I think is liable to great exceptions. We certainly can hardly be thought capable of defining what is above the power of the finite creature, and what not. Creation is justly reckoned an incommunicable power, though this is only a consequence from revelation, and particularly from worship being founded upon creation, and from this circumstance joined with it, that God will not give his glory to another; but what powers God may communicate to creatures, other than this, we cannot say, such as knowing the thoughts—perceiving things at a di-

stance—making a man to do so by private intimation or expression—controlling the elements—and many others that might be mentioned; therefore, I apprehend, it is the third that we must rest upon as the true and genuine definition of a miracle, &c. when it is evidently above the natural power of the visible agent, the person at whose command, at whose desire, or in attestation of whose claim, it is wrought. This is the point upon which we can most easily satisfy ourselves; and it is as sure an evidence of divine authority, as if we could certainly tell whether the thing produced could, or could not be effected by a finite power. It was from this that the Jews concluded, that our Saviour had the presence and assistance of God: “For no man can do the miracles that thou dost, except God be with him.”

We are now to consider what is the import of a miracle, and of its effect in confirmation of a doctrine. Prodiges and wonderful things properly prove nothing at all, except when they are professedly wrought in attestation of some truth, or of some claim of the person who does them. They rest upon this supposition, that such a power is an evidence of a divine commission, and they are naturally expected as the credentials of those who pretend a divine commission. The Jews, you see, made the demand of our Saviour, John vi. 30. ‘What sign shewest thou,’ &c. and though he sometimes refused to gratify their malicious petulance or obstinate incredulity, yet in general he appealed to his works, as the just and proper testimonies of his divine commission, John x. 25. “The

works that I do," &c. John xv. 24. "If I had not done among them," &c. There are some who tell us, that a miracle in attestation of the truth of a doctrine, must be considered as a sanction to it, only if this doctrine is in itself credible, consonant to reason, and worthy of belief. Those who reason in this manner, say, that some doctrines are so contrary or so shocking to reason, that no evidence can be more plain, even when a miracle is wrought, than the evidence of such doctrines being contrary to the nature and perfections of God. But I look upon this manner of reasoning to be very unjust and inconclusive. It tends, in the result, to set the reasonings of men, independent of revelation, above the testimony of God, and revelation itself. This seems to be the darling theme, not only of infidels, but of pretended friends to revealed religion, who are worse, if possible, than infidels themselves. It is easy to see that if this is the case, there can be no benefit received by revelation. Miracles are the only sanction that can be given to a revelation; yet before these will be admitted or suffered to be heard, these reasoners tell us, that we must consider the doctrine itself, whether it is worthy of God; and if they shall be pleased to judge that it is not, the miracles, and any other evidence that can be given, are set at nought as of no value, and the matter not even brought to a trial. This I apprehend to be really the case with many in the present age; but it seems to me very plain, that such is our blindness and ignorance in the things of God, that we know very little about them, till they are made known by God himself; and if we were to make our own reason the previous stan-

dard of what was admissible or not in quality of revelation, it would make mad work indeed. I shall care very little what men of vain and carnal minds say of my sentiments; but I have been many years of opinion, that as revelation was necessary, and revelation is given us, we act the most wise and truly rational part, if we take all our theological opinions immediately, and without challenge, from the oracles of truth. I confess it is agreeable to me to show, that the truths of the everlasting gospel are agreeable to sound reason, and founded upon the state of human nature; and I have made it my business, through my whole life, to illustrate this remark. Yet to begin by making the suggestion of our own reason the standard of what is to be heard or examined as a matter of revelation, I look upon to be highly dangerous, manifestly unjust, and inconsistent with the foundation-stone of all revealed religion, viz. that reason, without it, is insufficient to bring us to the knowledge of God and our duty; and therefore, as Socrates said to Alcibiades, "It is reasonable to think that God will come down into the world, to teach us his will." I am not insensible how far it would be just to carry the principle on which our adversaries ground their sentiments. Any new principles or doctrines, seemingly absurd in themselves, and unholy in their effects, would not, with judicious persons, be rashly or suddenly admitted; and the more suspicious the principles are in themselves, no doubt we must examine the pretensions to miracles the more carefully. This is the part of prudence; but to carry it further, and say, we will receive no evidence that God has taught

any thing different from what we ourselves think reasonable, is just weakening the truth before admitted, that revelation immediately from himself is evidently necessary.

It will be said by some, that sometimes pretensions not only to revelation, but to miracles, are contradictory, and destructive of each other. I admit there may be such a supposition made, but I look upon it as a necessary consequence of the wisdom of the divine government, that he will not suffer any of these things to be, without sufficient marks whereby an impartial inquirer may discover the difference. This was the case of Moses and the magicians in Egypt; they were suffered to perform many things similar to his miracles, but still the great superiority was to be seen in his; and perhaps by the comparisons made between them and the other, there was the more evident demonstration of the finger of God. On this whole subject, and particularly the import of miracles as the proof of a doctrine, see Bishop Fleetwood's works. These two preliminary points being discussed, what remains may be stated with the greater brevity, and to the greater advantage. The miracles in behalf of the truth of the gospel may be divided, as hinted above, into two parts: the fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the miracles during Christ's personal ministry. As to the first of these, nothing is more plain than the faith of believers being pointed, from the earliest ages, to a Saviour to come. From the first promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, through

all the after discoveries of the divine will, this was manifest, and indeed more and more manifest, as it drew nearer to the fulness of time. Their foreknowledge and foretelling of future events, is one of the most satisfying kind of miracles, and least liable to deceit. Christ was therefore the promised seed, the desire of all nations, the hope of Israel, the prophet that should come into the world. That he appeared at the time fixed in the ancient prophecies; that he answered all the characters or descriptions of the ancient prophets; that he did this in a way so peculiar, that he plainly fulfilled them, although not in the way the mistakes of the latter Jews made them expect from him, is clearly apparent; and as I have stated, under the head of presumptive proof, their having departed from the genuine spirit of the promises, and his appearing in a way contrary to their expectations, only seems to destroy every suspicion of fraud and imposture. Imposture could not have been continued and handed down through so many ages. Nothing like this is to be seen, or has ever been heard of in the history of mankind, and therefore Christ, as the Messias of the Jews, must give the most favourable reception to him as the Saviour of the world*. Here, too, we might particularly consider the miracles Christ performed in the days of his flesh. Then he appealed to as the evidences of his divine mission. But after the remarks that have been made above, on the subject absolutely considered, it will not be necessary to extend this part of it. I only remark that his miracles were upon the plainest subjects—the winds,

* See Redder's Demonstration of the Messias.

healing the sick, feeding the multitude, raising the dead. The Pharisees foolishly asked a sign from heaven. It had been much easier to have dazzled their eyes with the appearance of some extraordinary meteor in the airy regions, than to have given them the proofs which he actually did. I do not stay to illustrate the tender and benevolent subject of many of his miracles.

LECTURE VII.

WE now proceed to the consequential proofs of the truth of the Christian religion; that is to say, the circumstances that have arisen since the coming of Christ in the flesh, and his crucifixion on Mount Calvary. These I shall divide into the following branches: 1. Its incredible progress by the most unlikely means, great extent, and long continuance. 2. The great and valuable effects produced by it. 3. The visible fulfilment of scripture prophecies.

I. Let us consider its incredible progress. Immediately after Christ's ascension, his disciples went into different parts of the world, and spread the truth with a success altogether astonishing. It is agreed, I believe, that in less than fifty years the gospel was preached and embraced throughout the vast extent of the Roman empire. This argument does not appear in its full force, unless we consider by what means the effect was produced. The apparent instruments were only a few fishermen of Galilee, without either power or learning. One

would think it quite incredible that any of them should ever think of forming the design, still more so, that they should agree in it; for they were many and without a head; and that, though agreed, they should carry it into execution. That Minos in Crete, and Numa at Rome, professed lawgivers and heads of their petty inconsiderable tribes, should pretend intercourse with the gods, and procure reverence for their decrees, or that they should succeed in their little dominions for a very short time, is not wonderful. But that such persons as Matthew the publican, and his companions, should form a design of subverting the whole of the old religion, and introducing the new, and succeed in it, is altogether astonishing. The wonder increases when we consider, that these men were not united under any system of government among themselves, further than their principles of obedience to their Master, who had left the world. There was not any of them who claimed, or possessed superiority over the rest. They were separated from one another, without any prospect of ever meeting again on earth. Yet that they should agree in their doctrine, and propagate one religion, and that their separate writings should be the harmonious and concordant sum and standard of that religion, is not to be accounted for without the power and influence of that Providence which is over all the earth. It is not to be omitted here, that they obtained this success by preaching the divinity of a man who had been crucified, the most odious and contemptible idea that could be presented to the human mind. One would have thought, that as soon as Christ was crucified,

it would at once have put an end to all further respect and attention to him. This, it is most likely, his enemies, the high priests and Pharisees, thought themselves quite certain of, which made them so intent upon his crucifixion. I cannot help observing, that some judicious commentators have imagined that the devil, the great enemy of mankind, supposed the same thing. He, though acquainted in general with the end of the Saviour's mission, yet certainly was not acquainted with every part of the design of infinite wisdom, and thought, if he prevailed to have Christ rejected by the Jews, judged, condemned, and crucified by the Romans, he should entirely defeat the design. They suppose this to be the meaning of his triumphing over principalities and powers, making a shew of them on his cross, and by death destroying him that had the power of death, that is the devil. I must further observe, that the whole doctrine of Christ is most directly opposed to human pride; so much so indeed, that after it is embraced, and there is a general profession of it in any place, a worldly spirit is never at ease endeavouring to corrupt and alter it. I shall add but one circumstance more. The gospel was then successful, notwithstanding the greatest and most violent opposition made to it from every quarter. The heathen religions, as observed formerly, were not supposed to be mutually repugnant, and did not contend with one another; but they all contended with the gospel, which was indeed their common enemy. The most violent persecutions were raised against the Christians, throughout all the Roman empire. The philosophers and learned men, who

had never contended with the popular religion, all united their force against the Christian religion. Yet the divine wisdom defeated the counsel of the wise, and brought to nought the understanding of the prudent, that no flesh might glory in his presence. I must more particularly observe, that Julian the apostate, who was not only the most inveterate, but also the most wise and able enemy that ever set himself in opposition to the Christian faith, tried to assault it in every way that could be thought of; he found that cruelty and violence would not do, then he tried reproach and public shame. He encouraged the philosophers by his kindness, and assisted them by his writings, and indeed he carried on his opposition with so much zeal, that he even attempted the reformation of the Pagan religion, by insisting on the heathen priests imitating the Christians in their mortified carriage, and the charitable care of the poor. But all would not do; and he himself, by the circumstances of his death, proved one of the greatest means of spreading the triumphs of the gospel. When all these circumstances, with the enlargements of which they are capable, are taken together, the success of the gospel is a very powerful evidence of its divine original, so that we may well say, as the apostle did, "So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed!"

II. The second thing to be considered, is the great and valuable effects produced by the gospel. There is the greater reason to insist upon this part of the subject, that enemies have shewed a great inclination to deny or misrepresent them. I am, however, persuaded, that on a fair and candid examination, the

effects of the gospel will appear to be truly great, and truly extensive. The effects of the gospel may be considered in two views, as producing knowledge and practice. Now, did not the gospel introduce some knowledge in religion? Whoever will compare the system of religious belief which prevailed before, with that which took place after the publication of the gospel, will see the great excellence and virtue of that dispensation. Such was the power of divine light, that it actually in a short time banished the absurd polytheism and idolatry of the heathen nations. So complete was the victory, that it never has again dared to lift up its head. The enemies of religion are not now to be stripped of Venus and Bacchus, and the whole catalogue of those fictitious deities, the worship of whom, while it claimed to be religion, was nothing but a discipline of ignorance, vice, and impurity. The only knowledge of religion which was of value among the ancients, was the remains of tradition from the patriarchal age; and whatever now deserves that name is borrowed from the gospel. It was an early remark of the Christian apologists, that the gospel had put to silence the heathen oracles.

On this head it is particularly remarkable, that the knowledge of religion, which is the fruit of the gospel, is the acquisition of the multitude. There was something of this mentioned formerly in another view. It deserves, however, repeated notice, that the gospel was preached to the poor, and brought light, not to particular men, but to mankind in general. A mechanic or peasant, instructed in the oracles of truth, has now more just and con-

sistent notions of God, his perfections, his laws, his providence, than the most renowned philosophers of ancient times.

It is observed by some when on this subject, that the gospel has introduced the greatest improvements of human as well as divine knowledge: not but that those arts which depend entirely upon the exertion of human talents and powers, were carried to as great perfection before, as since the coming of Christ, in the heathen as in the Christian world, such as poetry, painting, statuary, &c. But natural knowledge, or the knowledge of the constitution and course of nature, began with, and increased by religious light; all the theories of the ancients, as to the formation and preservation of the earth and heavens, were childish and trifling. From revelation we learn the simple account of the creation of all things out of nothing, by the omnipotence of God; and perhaps there are few things more delightful than to observe, that the latest discoveries in philosophy have never shewn us any thing but what is perfectly consistent with the Scripture doctrine and history. There is one modern class or sect of divines, who affirm that all human science is to be found in the Bible--natural philosophy, astronomy, chronology. This, I am afraid, is going too far; but I think it had not been possible for any writer or writers in the age of the sacred penmen, to have written so much on the creation of the world, and its history since that, without being guilty of absurdities and contradictions, unless they had been under the direction of an infallible guide.

The next branch of this head is, to consider the

effects of the gospel as to practice. Here, I think, the first thing is to consider the manifest tendency and professed aim of the gospel itself, and its effects on those who truly believe it, and live according to it. The temper and character of such will appear to be truly admirable, and the more so upon a very strict and critical examination, if we consider the nobleness of their principles, the strictness, regularity, and universality of their practice, the usefulness and happy effects of their conversation. A Christian's heart is possessed by the love of God, and his will subjected to the order of his providence. Moderation and self-denial is his rule with respect to himself, and unfeigned good-will, proved by active beneficence, with regard to others. Nor is this at all matter of mere theory, it is certainly matter of experience; nay, its influence hath been, as it ought to be, powerful in gaining the assent of others to the truth of the doctrine. The visible and eminent piety of the first ministers of the New Testament, and the earliest converts, had the greatest effect in procuring reception to the principle that produced them. The general integrity of their lives, and the eminent appearance in some of them of the illustrious virtues, charity, fortitude and patience, was what subdued all opposition.

The heathens sometimes reproached one another by the comparison, saying, See how these Christians love one another! How honourable was it, when one of the apologists (Lactantius) was able to say, Give me a man who is wrathful, malicious, revengeful, and with a few words of God I will make

him calm as a lamb; give me one that is a covetous, niggardly miser, and I will give you him again liberal, bountiful, and dealing out of his money by handfuls; give me one that is fearful of pain and of death, and immediately he shall despite racks, and crosses, and the most dreadful punishments you can invent.

If we were to make a comparison between particulars, I apprehend the advantage would appear very just; but it is usual to state the comparison, not with regard to those that are truly religious, but to take it from the general conduct of those who profess the gospel. I am not sure that any comparison is just, but between real believers and others. However, we may make it both ways, and see how it will turn out. Compare the piety, humility, charity, and active zeal of a real Christian, with the most striking characters of ancient times, and the great superiority of the first will appear. Not only sottish idolatry, but lust, pride, ostentation, will appear to tarnish many of the last in a remarkable degree. But even with regard to mere profession, there is reason to say, that the manners of men are greatly improved, even where they are not sanctified.

He who will consider with attention the manners of ancient nations, will see great reason to abate of that veneration which his reading their exploits, as recorded by writers of eminence, may sometimes lead him into. There are persons to be found of such barbarity, in many instances prevailing through a nation, the custom of exposing their children; and in the case of some, there was such ferocity and

cruelty, either plundering their enemies, or selling them for slaves, in sacking cities, as would make a person of any humanity shudder in reading them. Rollin's character of the ancient Spartans, and President Goguet's account of the manners in general of the ancient ages, may give some conception of this matter.

LECTURE VIII.

THE third branch of this head, is the fulfilling of Scripture prophecies. This is an argument very satisfying to the mind, and which might be illustrated by a great variety of examples. The Old Testament prophecies I have had occasion to consider in a former part of the subject, and shall not now resume, further than by making this observation, that there are some prophecies here, which not only had their completion in Christ, but continue to be fulfilled in the present state of the world. Some entertaining peculiarities of this kind may be seen in several writers upon the partition of the earth, and the manner of its being peopled. In Delany's *Revelation examined with Candour*, there are some things well worthy of the attention of a judicious and critical reader. Take one example; he mentions the prophecy of Ishmael, "His hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." He says that this prophecy is fulfilling at this time as well as formerly; that the posterity of Ishmael, who settled in Arabia, are the

wild Arabs, a people that are in a state of opposition to all the neighbouring nations; that they never were subdued by any of the different princes that obtained dominion in different ages in those countries, and continue unconnected and unsubdued to this day.

But one of the chiefest instances we have to take notice of, on the subject of Scripture prophecies, is the history and present state of the Jewish nation. The destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, was prophesied of by our Saviour in a manner so distinct and so particular, that it is not easy to imagine any thing to exceed it. With regard to the temple in particular, he said that there should not remain one stone upon another that should not be thrown down. He describes the extreme misery of the people when Jerusalem should be compassed about with armies; and he fixes the time in the most precise manner, that that generation should not pass away till all was fulfilled; and, finally, he warns his own disciples, when certain signs appeared, to fly for safety. The reality of those prophecies, from the time in which they happened, and the facts with which they were connected, are so well established, as not to be easily capable of contradiction. And when we compare the event with them, it is truly astonishing; as the guilt of that people was very great, so the judgments on them were the most signal, terrible, and lasting, that were ever inflicted on any nation.

Their own historian (Josephus) gives such an account of the miseries of the siege, as is painful and shocking to read; at the same time the contentions

within the walls, and the unrelenting fury with which they were animated one against another, makes it impossible to consider them in any other light, than as a blinded and deserted people. Another circumstance also well worthy of attention is, that as they had crucified the Saviour, and were particularly desirous to have that punishment, which was not a Jewish but a Roman one, inflicted upon him; so, in the course of that siege, they were crucified round their own walls in such vast numbers, that they wanted wood to make crosses to hang them on. All this too was done under the command of Titus Vespasian, one of the mildest men that ever commanded an army; so that the supreme order of Providence seemed to be forcing into its own service every apparent instrument. It is well known that Titus, far from intending the destruction of the temple, had the utmost solicitude to have preserved it; but all was to no purpose, for God had said it should be destroyed. To add no more upon this head, the Christians, in general, by attending to their Master's predictions, and following his advice, were preserved from the calamity.

Beside the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, the Jews themselves, as a nation, continue a standing proof of the Scripture prophecies. Their continuing a separate people, notwithstanding their dispersion through all the earth for above 1700 years, and not mixing with other nations, is an event quite singular, that never happened in any other case; so that it appears quite supernatural, as if they were prepared by the providence

of God to prove the truth of the Meſſiah, and to wait till their converſion ſhall crown the work, and be, as the Scripture ſays, “ life from the dead.”

The other prophecies in the New Teſtament, in their accompliſhment in the courſe of Providence, do alſo afford much entertainment and inſtruction to a ſerious mind. They are principally contained in the Revelations of St John the Divine. I ſhall only now take notice of one, viz. Antichriſt, or the man of ſin, deſcribed in 2 Theſſ. ii. 3. “ Who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf againſt all that is called God,” &c. The Proteſtant writers very generally ſuppoſe that the Pope and Roman Catholic ſyſtem of ſuperſtition are the Antichriſt propheſied of, and indeed they ſeem very much to quadrate with the deſcription. The ſitting in the temple of God, and ſhewing himſelf that he is God, correſponds ſurpriſingly with the extravagant pretenſions to infallibility in that church, and the exceſſive ſecular power and profit which it is intended to bring to the prieſthood. The account in the Revelation, of kings and princes giving their power and honour to the beaſt, and no man being allowed to buy and ſell but thoſe who had the mark of the beaſt, correſponds exactly to the arrangements made by the Popiſh ſtates for many ages, to the uſurped dominion, and to that tyranny over conſcience which was every where exerciſed. The deſcription of myſtical Babylon, in the 17th of the Revelations, ſeems in all reſpects to quadrate with the city of Rome. The ſeven heads are ſaid to be ſeven mountains on which the woman ſitteth, and in the cloſe of the chapter it is ſaid,

“And the woman whom they sawest, is that great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth.” To all this you may add that part of the description, that she was drunken with the blood of the saints, which was so eminently fulfilled in the dreadful persecutions for conscience sake which were dictated by the antichristian spirit, and carried on in the antichristian states. To finish this parallel, the two witnesses who prophesied in sackcloth, are supposed to be those who never received the Romish superstitions, the Waldenses and the Albigenes in the Piedmontese vallies; by the history of whom it appears, that their faith and worship had been the same that it was from the beginning, and the same that was received and embraced at the Reformation. This remarkable period is supposed to be painted in the deadly wound given to the beast, notwithstanding which it did live, and in the ten horns which should hate the whore and make her desolate, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

After this account, I must observe that there are some Protestant writers who have not fallen in with the scheme of making the Pope to be the Antichrist described in the New Testament; and as the apostle says there are many antichrists, so these persons say there is an antichristian spirit in every church, or the corrupt part constantly in opposition to the sound; truth striving with error, and pride with the meekness of the gospel. If this is admitted, the Roman catholic church may still be considered as the scene of antichristian usurpation, and it should put all others upon their guard, lest they in any degree partake of the sin, and so expose themselves to

the judgment of the great whore. I shall only add, that there is a late opinion advanced by Messrs Glas and S——, which, so far as I know, was never thought of before these, viz. that an established church is Antichrist, that whatever has the approbation and authority of the civil government in any state interposed in its behalf, not only may, but must be contrary to the gospel. This is certainly carrying matters to excess, as is usual with interested persons, incensed with what they suppose to be injurious treatment. Mr Glas being cast out of the established church of Scotland, and perhaps by an unnecessary stretch of power, fell into this resentful opinion; so that I do not see how this sentiment can be supported, either from Scripture or reason, as it would seem to make it impossible for the kingdoms of this world, to become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, or for kings to become nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church; but so far I shall readily admit, that an intolerant establishment, and all tyranny over the conscience, partakes of an antichristian spirit.

It will now be time to consider a little, the objections against the Christian religion. It is easy to see, that there must be in every infidel writer particular cavils and exceptions, which are so numerous, and so various, that it would be in vain to attempt to mention them; but there are some general exceptions, which are to be found in all their writings, and on which they insist most, that it will be proper to take notice of. Two of these have indeed already been taken notice of, as they fell in the way, viz. That reason is a sufficient guide to truth and

happinefs, and therefore revelation is unnecessary ; and that miracles are impoffible and incredible. Thefe I pafs with what has been faid on them above.

A third objection which ufed to be very much infifted upon, is the want of univerfality. If the Chriftian revelation was neceffary, why was it not given in its full extent from the beginning of the world, and fpread through all nations? Why was the world in general fo long left in darknefs? and at this time, why are there fuch vaft regions, and fuch multitudes of people, that are without the light of the gofpel? Many different answers have been given to this objection : fome fhewing the extent to which the gofpel has been carried ; fome fhewing that the mercy of God through Chrift will extend to all nations, in proportion to the improvement of the meafure of light afforded them. But I apprehend there is a much more eafy and fatisfying answer to be given to it, which is this, that the objection proceeds from a groundlefs prefumption that we are to judge of all the divine proceedings, and find fault with them, becaufe they do not exactly follow the rules which we fhould have prefcribed. It militates equally againft natural and revealed religion. It may as well be asked, why is not every reptile a man, and every man an angel? Why is not every creature as happy as he poffibly could have been made? Nature and providence are full of inftinctive analogy upon this fubject. Why was not the earth peopled as early and as fully as poffible? Why were the vaft trafts of fruitful land in America fuffered, for fo many ages, to be a wild

forest, inhabited by wolves and tigers, and a few men almost as fierce as they? Nay, we may go much farther, and ask, why was not the world, which appears to be only near 6000 years old, created millions of years before that period? The true and proper answer to every such question is, to resolve it into the sovereignty of God—He hath a right to bestow his mercies in the time, manner, and measure, that seem good unto himself. With regard to the difficulty about creation, some have attempted to assume a necessity that every thing is necessary to the good of the whole, and so a worm in its place is as necessary as an angel; and one writer has attempted to prove, that the world could not have been created any sooner, because, though it were now a million of years old, instead of 6000, the question would still remain; but this is only wading beyond our depth, and using words to which, if we affix any precise, it must be allowed we have not a complete or adequate idea. With respect to the time of the publication, and the extent of the progress of gospel light, or even the numbers that are benefited by it, I would say, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight;” and I would particularly observe, that stating this as an objection against the truth of the gospel, is forgetting the great and fundamental doctrine of the gospel, that all men are under sin, and liable to the divine wrath; and that sending Christ into the world is an act of free and sovereign grace. If, therefore, it be really mercy to those that are saved, no objection can be brought against it from the number or circumstances of those that perish.

4. Another great objection against Christianity is, that it introduced into the world persecution for conscience sake, which was before unknown. This is an argument on which infidels delight to enlarge. The fierce contests that have been upon the subject of religion, and the many who have died in the field, and been brought to a scaffold or stake on religious accounts, have been set forth in all the force of language. There is no argument used by infidels that I think may be more easily refuted, or rather, indeed, be effectually turned against themselves than this. In the first place, it is a plain accomplishment of our Saviour's prediction, "Think not I am come to send peace on the earth." Now, if this never happened before upon a religious account, which the argument supposes, by what means should he foresee it but by a preternatural knowledge? But after we have gone thus far, we are still to observe, that the Christian religion in no other way introduced persecution for conscience sake, than by suffering, not inflicting it. It was persecuted by Jews and Gentiles with unrelenting fury for 300 years after the coming of Christ in the flesh. Is there any body that opens the Bible, that does not see that persecution is not taught there? It will be said, that in after ages Christians persecuted Christians, with as much rage as the heathen ever did. I answer, if that matter be carefully looked into, it will be found, that it was the spirit of the world that persecuted the meek believers in Christ, in every age. There is a remark of a certain writer, that the persecution carried on against the Protestants in France, was not by bigots, and those under the

power of superstition, but by those who were low in their principles, and had no religion of any kind. But this is not so great a rarity as he imagined, for it is but seldom that persons who are much in earnest about religion themselves, are concerned in opposing others; at any rate it is manifest, that none can rashly judge, much less persecute others, if they attend to the doctrine of the gospel.

LECTURE IX.

Of the Doctrine of the Trinity.

IT seems highly necessary that students of divinity should give particular attention to this subject, as it relates to the very nature of the true God who is the object of our worship and trust. Indeed, as it is so nearly connected with the doctrine of redemption, its importance is apparent. We cannot form just notions, and indeed hardly any, of the satisfaction of Christ, without being explicit upon this head. Let us first endeavour to state, as briefly and clearly as possible, what the Scriptures teach us to believe on the subject, as summed up in the Protestant confession, distinguishing it from opposite errors, and afterwards give a succinct view of the proofs. The doctrine may be briefly summed in two branches: 1. The unity of the divine nature; 2. The Trinity of persons in the divine essence.

First, The unity of the divine nature. That there is but one God, infinite, eternal, unchange-

able, indivisible. The unity of the Godhead is greatly insisted on in Scripture. It seems to have been the capital article of revealed truth under the Old Testament dispensation, in opposition to the vanities of the Gentiles. The first commandment of the decalogue is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" and again, Deut. vi. 4. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." The glory of God is particularly asserted upon this subject, that he will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images. The unity of God seems to be the grand article of natural religion, clearly supported by reason, from the impossibility of supposing infinite perfection to reside in more than one subject, as well as from the harmony and unity of the design that appears in the universal system. This part of the subject suffers no difficulty which arises from the addition of the other particular from revelation, viz. 2. That in this unity of the divine nature, and in a perfect consistency with it, there is a threefold distinction; in other words, there is the most perfect simplicity and unity of nature, and yet in the mode of existence a plurality. We call it in English, three persons in the Godhead. The ancient fathers used to call it in Greek, *τρεις υποστασεις*. It would be wrong to contend that either of these gives a full and adequate idea of it, because indeed it is incomprehensible. For in the language of inspiration it is said to be the Father, the Word or the Son, and the Holy Ghost or Spirit. As soon as men began to dispute upon the subject, and exercise their reason, imagination, or invention upon a mat-

ter of mere revelation. (as was soon done by the mixture of Platonic philosophy with the study of the Scriptures) they fell into various opposite errors, which however were all of them constantly condemned and opposed by the consent of orthodox writers. Some said there was no distinction at all in the divine Being, only he was represented in different lights, and made known by different names, as standing in different relations to us. Sabellius, I believe, was the first author of this doctrine, and they were afterwards called from him Sabellians, and sometimes Patripassians, from the consequence of that doctrine, that the Father, as much as the Son, must have suffered upon the cross. Others went to the opposite extreme, and supposed there are three wholly distinct and independent, but concordant Beings. Neither of these have ever been the general sentiments of Christian divines; nor do I think any of them is at all agreeable to Scripture or reason. We find in Scripture most clear and positive assertions of the unity of God on the one hand, and on the other, a real plurality in some respects. There is a common, peculiar, and reciprocal, but distinct agency. The Father is said to beget the Son, to send the Son; and the Son to pray to the Father, to promise and to send the Spirit, which is said to proceed from the Father; and the solemn benediction is in the name and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.

Some time before the Council of Nice, Arius set on foot his notions of the inferiority of the Son and Spirit, calling them, either properly or improperly,

creatures. I use the word *improperly*, because there were some, especially in latter times, called refined Arians, who respected the Son as dependent in the order of nature; but, at the same time, as an eternal effect from an eternal cause. In opposition to Arius, the Council of Nice asserted the Son to be truly and properly God, of one substance with the Father, self-existent and independent. Last of all came the Pelagians and the Socinians, who denied the divine nature of Christ altogether, and asserted that he was only a man. These opinions, as doing the utmost violence to Scripture, and overthrowing the whole doctrine of redemption, deserved to be treated with the utmost abhorrence. Nor indeed are Arians at bottom much better, because the difference between the most exalted creature and the meanest, vanishes altogether when compared with the difference between the mightiest order of created beings and the true God.

The whole economy of our salvation teaches us the necessity of attending to and believing this doctrine; but I see neither necessity nor propriety in endeavouring to dip into the mode of it, and attempting to explain it. If it be a mystery, and above our comprehension, every attempt to explain it must be, if not criminal, yet unsuccessful." And indeed this is the case with almost every thing that relates to God, or is connected with the divine perfection. The wisest way for us, with regard to all revealed truth, is to receive it as revealed, not presuming to be wise above what is written.

I do not mean by this to condemn the Council of Nice, for though there may not be a great deal in

some of the expressions used by them, their only meaning was to express their disapprobation of the opinion of Arius, which was certainly subversive of the proper divinity of Christ. But I apprehend we ought to condemn the making emblems of this truth, such as a triangle inscribed in a circle. This at least is of no use, or more probably it is always pernicious; and indeed I should think it a direct breach of the second commandment; nay, I think attempting to explain it by the powers of created intelligences, is no way safe or proper, although done by some very worthy men; for an example, when the Trinity is supposed to correspond with power, intellect and will, in the human nature.

It is not the usual way, on most subjects, to introduce or answer objections, before proposing the proof; yet I believe it will be the most proper method on the subject we are now treating. The difficulty here does not arise from the weakness, uncertainty, or obscurity of the proof, but from the power of prejudice. In order, therefore, to prevent or destroy prejudice, it will be best to consider what objections lie in the way of the doctrine; the rather, indeed, that all objections to the doctrine itself are reducible to one—that it is contrary to reason, absurd, inconceivable, or impossible. It is surprising to think with what insolence and triumph some have pretended to treat this sentiment, saying it is a contradiction that God should be both one and three at the same time. But notwithstanding the great confidence with which enemies to the truth talk upon this subject, I am sincerely of opinion, that their confidence never could be more misplaced. Let us

examine the matter coolly and impartially. When men speak of a thing as against reason, and yet pretend to believe in revelation, the meaning must be, that it is so manifestly absurd and self-contradictory, that no proof can support a revelation which contains it. But in order to this, it must be a thing altogether within the compass of our reason and judgment; if otherwise, the first unexperienced dictate of reason is nothing at all, neither for nor against it. The state of nature and experimental philosophy did scarcely ever shew things to be what men imagined them before; neither is it at all wonderful that revelation should inform us of what we could not have suspected. The use of revelation indeed implies this. Therefore the common distinction of systematical divines, is far from being either obscure or improper, that things may be above reason, and yet not contradictory to it.

By this expression, *above reason*, may be understood two things—beyond the power of reason to discover, and above the reach of reason to comprehend. In the first sense it would be absurd to controvert it, and even in the other, if it was carefully attended to, and prejudice laid aside, there would be little difficulty. The enemies of the truth always put more in the idea than is intended, or ought to be contained in it. The just statement of it is precisely this, we believe a fact which is fully proved and authenticated, although there are some circumstances, as to its cause and consequences, that we do not understand. There are many things in theological, moral, and natural knowledge, in which the

case is the very same. I believe that God is a spirit, and that there are also created spirits different from God, wholly unembodied, and yet I have very obscure and indistinct ideas, if any idea properly at all, of what a spirit is, and the manner of its operation. Cartesians believe that a spirit has no extension, and that a hundred thousand of them may be in the same place; which, by the bye, is an example of the absurdity with which men talk upon subjects which they do not understand; for, according to them, place is a relation incompetent to a spirit, and therefore it is as absurd to say that a spirit is in a place, as that three are in the same place. The whole matter is above our comprehension, and no man can make me understand, either how distinct substances can occupy the same place, or even the Newtonian opinion, that a substance, simple and indivisible, can be in every place. From which it is demonstrable, that there may be many circumstances relating to things of great moment and certainty, that are to us totally incomprehensible. In natural things I believe, that the seed rotting in the ground is the mean of producing the blade of the future stalk; but if you ask me how this is done, or how the moist earth can have any influence either on the mortification or the growth, I know nothing at all about it.

Therefore, though we say that the Trinity in unity is incomprehensible, or above reason, we say nothing that is absurd or contrary to reason; so far from it, I may say rather it is consonant to reason and the analogy of nature, that there should be many things in the divine nature that we cannot fully

comprehend. There are many such things in his providence, and surely much more in his essence.

But when our adversaries are pressed upon this subject, they say sometimes it is not an incomprehensible mystery we find fault with, but an apparent contradiction that God should be three and one. We know very well what numbers are, and we know perfectly, whatever is three cannot be one, or one three. But this is owing to great inattention, or great obstinacy. We do not say there are three Gods and yet one God; three persons and yet one person; or that the divine Being is three in the same sense and respect that he is one; but only that there is a distinction, consistent with perfect unity of nature. I apprehend great reserve and self-denial is our duty on this subject. It has sometimes been said, why should we doubt whether there can be three persons in one nature, when we ourselves are an example of an incomprehensible union of this nature in our persons. If this be used merely as an illustration, and to shew that the thing is possible and credible, I have no objection to it; but if it be carried farther, it is improper and dangerous.

Upon the whole, we ought to consider the objection against this doctrine as altogether ill-founded, and be ready to receive, with all humility, the revelation of God upon this subject, just as he has been pleased to communicate it.

The second thing to be attended to is the proof of the doctrine, as contained in the holy Scriptures. On this I will just very shortly consider the Scripture proof of the Trinity in general, and then, at some more length, point out the proofs of the proper

deity of Christ the Son ; upon which last, as is natural to suppose, the controversy hath always chiefly turned.

The proofs of the Trinity in general may be taken, 1. From the form of baptism ; we are commanded to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

As baptism is the initiating profession taken from all converts, it seems evidently to point at the great object of worship and obedience. Neither do I see at all how it can be accounted for, that the Son and Holy Ghost should be classed and put upon the same footing with the Father, but upon the supposition of this truth. And indeed their very designation leads us to an equality of rank ; it is not said, in the name of God, and the name of Jesus of Nazareth, or his human name, but in the name of the Father and the Son. Those who will consider this matter attentively, will find more in it than perhaps at first sight appeared. Baptism is certainly the badge of Christianity, the seal of God's covenant. With whom then is a covenant made ? Doubtless with those in whose name we were baptized, and therefore our covenant God is most fully described by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. To this you may add, that the apostle Paul seemed plainly, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, to consider baptism as pointing at something very different from any relation that a minister could sustain. 1 Cor. i. 13, 14, 15. " Is Christ divided ? Was Paul crucified for you ? " &c.

2. The proof of the Trinity in general may be taken from the form of solemn benediction—the

love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. As in the former instance, the three are taken in as the object of worship and obedience, here they are plainly conjoined as the source of blessedness.

3. The proof of the Trinity in general may be taken from an express passage of Scripture, 1 John v. 7. "There are three that bear record in heaven," &c.

LECTURE X.

WE come now to prove the doctrine of the Trinity from the proofs of the proper deity of the Son and Spirit. On this the controversy has chiefly turned, and especially the first, the divinity of the Son; because, if this was admitted, it would be to very little purpose to object against the other. For this reason we find, that ever since the first starting of the controversy, it has been litigated with great zeal and warmth on both sides. This was to be expected, as it must evidently appear an article of the utmost moment to both. I must observe, however, that the controversy has been chiefly managed by Arians till of late years. Now it seems to me there are but very few proper Arians, the greater number of the opposers of the truth are Socinians.

You are not to expect that I should go through the whole of this controversy, which has been carried to so great a length; the passages of Scripture

adduced on both sides are more numerous than we would suppose; and the criticisms, objections and answers, are exceedingly voluminous. You will say, then, the controversy must needs be difficult and obscure. The consequence is not just; for whenever there is a strong bias and inclination one way, it is easy for ingenious men to perplex and lengthen out a dispute. The great matter is the objection I mentioned in the preceding discourse. If men be once fully satisfied that this thing is not impossible or incredible, and be willing to assent to the account of the nature of God without prejudice, as it stands in his own word, I do not think there is any uncertainty in it at all. I shall state to you the chief heads of any importance that have been used.

I. The name of God and his titles, the most transcendent and peculiar, are given to Christ. Through the Old Testament, the name of Jehovah or Lord, but particularly the first, is given to one who is often called an angel, and the angel of the covenant; and by this manner of speaking in several passages, must be distinguished from God the Father, as in the 110th Psalm, "The Lord said unto my Lord." This, therefore, must be understood of Christ. The angel who appeared to Hagar, Gen. xvi. and that appeared to Jacob at Bethel, Gen. xiii. are both called God. In Exodus, chap. iii. an angel is said to have appeared to Moses at the bush, and yet this angel says, I am the God of your father, the God of Israel, who delivered the law on Mount Sinai, and yet Stephen says, Acts vii. 38. that it was an angel that spoke unto Moses upon mount Sinai, and was with the fathers; but

what serves to apply many of these passages in the most precise manner, is comparing Numb. xxi. 8. with 1 Cor. x. 9. In the first it is said, that the Israelites tempted God, and spake against God, and that therefore he sent among them fiery serpents. In the other passage the apostle Paul affirmeth, that this was Christ: "Let us not tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." See farther, Psalm ii. 12. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Psal. xlv. 7. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," &c. which passage the apostle Paul applies to Christ, Heb. i. 8. "But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," &c. Another proof may be taken from Prov. viii. 22. the description of wisdom. Again, in Isa. vi. from the beginning, "In the year that king Uzziah died," &c. This passage is expressly applied to Christ by the apostle John, xii. 41. when, having cited the passage, he says, "These things said Isaiah," &c. The truth is, there is hardly any writing in the Old Testament but, by comparing it with the New, we may draw a proof of the divinity of Christ.

2. The thing itself, the proposition that Jesus Christ is God, is contained in the most explicit terms, not in one, but in many places of Scripture; not in figure, but in plain, simple language, John i. 1. "In the beginning was the word," &c. Phil. ii. 6. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," &c. John x. 30. "I and my Father are one." 1 John v. 20. "This is the true God and eternal life." It would be endless to mention all fetches and imaginations of men

under the power of prejudice, to evade these texts ; but I only call to your mind what was before mentioned—Cleave to either side of the question, and say, Whether or not the Scriptures have plainly affirmed Christ's divinity? It is not only the affixations, but the reasoning upon some of them, that fixes the sense, as in the Philippians. And in that affirmation, "I and my Father are one," it is undeniable that the Jews understood him in that sense, for it is added, "They immediately took up stones to stone him," &c. It has been often said by reasoners upon this subject, supposing it was the design of the Scripture to affirm the divinity of Christ, it does not appear what plainer or stronger words could have been used.

3. The most distinguishing and essential attributes of the true God are given to Christ. I shall mention only his eternity, immutability, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. It is not easy to conceive any attribute incommunicable, if these are not. Eternity seems plainly to be ascribed to him, Prov. viii. 22. Rev. i. 8. &c. and in the famous passage, Mic. v. 2. "Whose goings forth have been of old from (1.) everlasting." Indeed I reckon the frequent appellation of Jehovah as a sufficient proof of this; the word is derived from what signifies existence, Exod. iii. 14. John viii. 38.

(2.) Immutability, Heb. i. 10. Heb. xviii. 8. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

(3.) Omniscience. John xvi. 30. "Now we are sure that thou knowest all things;" and again, John xxi. 17. "Lord, thou knowest all things," &c.

It is remarkable, that the knowledge of the heart is asserted in several passages to distinguish the true God: 1 Kings viii. 39. "Thou, even thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men;" and John xvii. 10. "I the Lord search the hearts and try the reins," &c. yet this very perfection our Lord claims to himself, Rev. ii. 23. and the apostle John testifies that he knew all men, John ii. 24. and knew what was in man, John ii. 25.; this is further confirmed, iv. 12, 13. "The word of God," &c.

(4.) Omnipresence. Matt. xviii. 20. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name," &c. Matt. xxviii. 20. "Lo, I am with you always," &c.

(5.) Omnipotence. Col. i. 17. "By him all things consist." Creation is ascribed to Christ, John i. 3. "All things were made by him," &c. and in the same chapter, verse 10. "and the world was made by him." Heb. i. 2. "By whom also he made the world." Col. i. 15, 16, 17. "Who is the image of the invisible God," &c. The argument from creation is very strong. It is the first and great relation we stand under to God, nor can we conceive any thing that more properly, or in a more distinguishing manner, characterizes the true God, who pleads it so often, to distinguish himself from the vanities of the Gentiles, Psal. xix. 1. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work."

5. The fifth and last proof of the divinity of Christ, may be taken from divine worship being

commanded to be given to him, and being accepted by him without reproof, when it is expressly rejected by the inferior ministers of Providence. It is commanded to be given to him, John iii. 22, 23. "The Father himself judgeth no man." Phil. ii. 5. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him," &c. It is actually given him by the wise men, Matt. ii. 11. by the rulers of the synagogue, Matt. v. 8. by women of Canaan, Matt. xv. 25. by the disciples in general, Matt. xx. 5. and you see that worship is rejected by an angel, Rev. xxii. 8, 9.

LECTURE XI.

I PROCEED now shortly to consider the proofs of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The first thing necessary here, is to establish the personality of the Spirit; that he is properly a person or substance, and not merely a power, gift, or qualification. The name of spirit, in all languages, signifies a wind or breath. It is supposed this word is chosen to represent divine things, or the divine nature, because it bears some resemblance to what is unseen, and yet infinitely powerful. The wind is made use of to represent the Holy Ghost, and to signify angels and the souls of men, and also the gifts and graces of the Spirit. That when the Holy Ghost is spoken of, a person or substance is meant, as distinguished from any grace or qualification he may possess or bestow, may be easily made to appear from many passages of Scripture. John xiv. 16. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another

Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive." John xvi. 13. "When he the Spirit of truth is come," &c. 1 Cor. xii. 4. "There are diversity of gifts, but the same Spirit," &c. The form of baptism also proves the same thing, as well as all those passages that speak of giving the Spirit—resisting the Spirit, &c.

That the Holy Ghost is truly and properly God, I think appears with great evidence from the form of baptism, now that we have fully proved the divinity of Christ, whose personality we cannot doubt. The Holy Ghost being joined with the Father and the Son, carries the strongest conviction with it that he is of the same nature with both. The same thing may be said of the form of solemn benediction.

The divinity of the Holy Ghost seems to be established in Acts v. 3. where Peter says to Ananias and Sapphira, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart," &c. We might also from several passages shew the divine attributes given to the Spirit, as omnipotence, Psal. cxix. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit," &c. Omniscience, Cor. ii. 10. "The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God;" nay, creation seems to be ascribed to him as well as the Son; Gen. i. 2. it is said, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," and Job xxxiii. 4. "The Spirit of the Lord hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."

There were in the ancient churches considerable controversies about the expression of the articles of faith upon this subject. The very words of Scrip-

ture, John xv. 26. are, that the Spirit proceedeth from the Father. He is also called the Spirit of the Son, and the Spirit of Christ, Rom. viii. 9. Gal. xiv. 6. Phil. i. 14. 1 Pet. i. 11. both the Father and the Son are said to send the Spirit, John xv. 26. John xvi. 7. Gal. iv. 6. Luke xxiv. 49.

Therefore the usual way of speaking, and that in all the ancient symbols and confessions is, that the Son is begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son. If any one should presume to inquire farther into the meaning, or ask the difference between being begotten and proceeding, I should willingly and cheerfully confess my ignorance, and that I believe all others are equally ignorant, and that every attempt to say more than is actually contained in Scripture, is not only impossible but hurtful. There was a very violent dispute between the Latin and Greek churches, whether it was proper to say the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and Son, or from the Father only. The whole current of antiquity, and the whole Latin churches are for the former, as well as the Protestants in general; but it is not a modern controversy.

I proceed to consider some of the objections against the reasoning above, and unless I enter into the criticisms or particular texts, they may be all reduced to the reasoning on the titles and attributes. They object that some of the highest titles were not given to the Son, as the Highest or Most High, the Almighty or Supreme over all, one God and Father of all, one God of whom are all things. But it is easy to answer, that none of these titles are greater

or more distinguishing than, as has been shewn, do really belong to Christ, and that some of those mentioned are also ascribed to Christ, such as the Almighty, and God over all. So that they are obliged to have recourse to the meanest quibbles to interpret away these texts. As for the expression one God, and the title one God, the Father, of whom are all things, they are plainly used in a distribution of personal acts or prerogatives, one God the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.

The other objection is, that such titles are ascribed to him in a lower sense than to the Father. Nothing could suggest such an objection as this, except the power of prejudice. They must first take for granted their own sentiments, before they can perceive any such thing; besides, many of them are such as do not admit of a proportion in this way, such as creation, omniscience, omnipotence.

LECTURE XII.

Of the Decrees of God.

WE have this strong assertion in Scripture, "Can any by searching find out the Almighty," &c. If the nature of God has something in it altogether unsearchable to us, so must also his decrees. It is certainly proper and necessary for divines to know all that can be known on this subject, and therefore the study of a whole life would

be well bestowed on it, if it were sure of success. Yet I apprehend a caution is not unnecessary while we are entering upon it. Our great wisdom consists in receiving, admitting, remembering, and applying, whatever is clearly revealed in Scripture, with regard both to the nature and government of God; at the same time, we ought to restrain an impatient curiosity, and guard against unnecessary, inexplicable, and hurtful questions, on these subjects. The Scriptures do not contain any thing that is unfit for us to know. If it seemed necessary to God to reveal the universality of his providence, and the certainty of his purpose, we ought without doubt to believe and improve it. On the other hand, let us not presume to go any farther than he hath pointed out to us the way. Whatever he hath covered with a veil, it would be both rashness and impiety to attempt to penetrate. It is therefore my design to state this matter to you in as precise and scriptural a manner as I am able, although I must necessarily use several of the theological systematical phrases, because without them the various opinions could neither be sifted nor explained.

The expression itself, "the decrees of God," is in a great measure, if not wholly technical. In the Old Testament, indeed, there are several expressions particularly relating to the frame and constitution of nature, which are translated in the English Bible *decrees*, as in Prov. viii. 29. "When he gave to the sea his decree," &c. and in the second Psalm, speaking of the raising Messiah to his throne, "I will declare the decree." In all of these I believe (for I have consulted most of them) it is the same

word that is frequently or usually translated *statute*, and to be sure has a meaning somewhat similar to that of the word used in theology; that is, it signifies the order or purpose of God in nature and providence. In the New Testament there is no expression on this subject that has been translated *decree*, though some of the phrases might have been so translated. The expressions in the New Testament are *council*, *purpose*, *determinate council*, *foreknowledge*; and when it relates to the state of man, *choosing*, *ordaining*, *predestinating*. I enter upon the criticism of the Greek words, because I think it is manifest they are not only translated well into English, but that they are mostly, if not wholly, of the same import that they are usually understood to possess. I shall now shew you a sample of the Socinian criticism on Acts xiii. 48. It is said, *οτις εταυ τεταχμενοι εις ζων αιωνιον*, which they translate, "as many as were set in order, or well prepared for eternal life, believed." They observe that *τεταχμενοι* means, set in order like a disciplined army. But it is manifest that the word here means, *particularly appointed and ordained*. By comparing together the several expressions used, the meaning that we must assign to the whole is, that the plan of providence and grace, as well as the system of nature, must be supposed to be fixed and determined, and not loose and uncertain, till the event, or till one thing be ascertained or determined by another; that things are not to God as they are to us, to whom things future have no certainty or stability, but that as far back as we can carry our ideas they were known, and therefore certainly ordained. Or,

as some express it, that every thing that comes to have a transient existence in time, had, as it were, an original eternal pre-existence in the divine mind. Yet, after all, you see there is something in the expression *decrees* or *purposes*, which seems to take its rise only from our own situations and imperfections.

Men are obliged to meditate, concert, and digest their plans of future conduct, before they begin to act, and then it is called their purpose, resolution, or design, as distinct from the actual execution. From this we seem by analogy to borrow the divine decrees. Yet every thing that implies or arises from ignorance, uncertainty, weakness, or imperfection, must be as much as is in our power, separated and abstracted, when we speak of the decrees of God.

This leads us to observe, that it has often been remarked by divines, that we are not to consider the divine decrees, in so far as they are acts of the divine will, as being any thing different or distinct from the divine nature. There are some who have used the expression *immanent decrees*, a phrase which I confess I do not in the least degree understand the meaning of, and therefore I can neither affirm nor contradict it; without doubt we are to separate every thing belonging to created weakness. We are not to suppose that God needs forethought to discover, or time to digest his plans, or that by any act of his will he seeks information, or seeks or receives gratification from any thing without him. If by calling the decrees of God immanent acts, it is meant to deny these, it is so far just. But when it

is affirmed, that the acts of the divine will are the same with the divine nature, as if this explained the difference between divine and human volitions, this I confess is to me quite incomprehensible.

In what shall be further offered on this subject, I shall follow this method:—

1. Speak a little of the object of the divine decrees.
2. Of the order of the decrees.
3. Of the character, quality, or attributes of the decrees, as given in Scripture.
4. Of their uses.

I. Let us consider the object of the decrees, and of this but a little, because it will occur again where it is of moment to examine it; yet it will throw some light upon some parts of the doctrine to observe,

1. That the objects of the divine decrees are strictly and properly universal; so much so indeed, as not to admit of any exception, or shadow of exception—all creatures, and all their actions, and all events. Let us vary it as we please, still it relates to every action, and every mode of the action, and every quality that can be attributed to it, whatsoever comes to pass. The reason of this is plain; whatever we shall think fit to say upon the connexion or influence of one creature or thing upon another, from which all the difficulty and confusion arises, yet every such thing, and that connexion itself, as much as the things to which it relates, is the object to which the divine foreknowledge and the divine purpose extended. One would think that men should be agreed on this point; and probably they

are so, if they understood one another; all but those extravagant persons, as they may well be called, who finding themselves hard pressed by the arguments drawn from the divine prescience, have thought it best to deny the foreknowledge of God altogether, or affirm that nothing that is future can possibly be certainly, or any more than conjecturally known, till it happens. But this sentiment is so repugnant to Scripture, and indeed to the common sense and reason of mankind, that few have strictly and sincerely defended it, though some have occasionally and hypocritically advanced it.

2. With respect to the object of the divine decrees, it must be admitted, that there is some difference between the light in which some events and actions are to be considered, and others. The great difficulty, indeed, and that which will speedily set bounds to our inquiry on the subject, is to shew wherein the difference consists; yet it is equally certain, from revelation and reason, that natural good and evil, and moral good and evil, are to be considered as not in the same sense the object of divine appointment. This leads us to the

Second general head, which was to consider the order of the decrees. Many things may be, and many things have been said upon this subject. Divines who have published systems, have generally exercised their ingenuity in giving what they call an order of the decrees. The chief thing such writers have in view, is to form a conception for themselves and others, with regard to, and to account for the divine purposes, with regard to the final state of man. The orders which have been laid down by

different writers, are so very numerous, that they all seem to me to labour under, and equally to labour under this prodigious weakness, that they represent the Supreme Being as varying and marshalling his views, and comparing as men do, which yet is acknowledged to be wrong. They also seem to carry in them the supposition of successive duration; yet successive duration we have generally agreed not to ascribe to God, although, of any other kind of existence we have not the least conception. It is impossible for me to go through all the different arrangements that have been made by particular authors: I shall therefore only give you a succinct view of the chief differences of divines of different classes, Calvinists, Arminians, Socinians.

Calvinists are divided upon this subject into two sorts, commonly called Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians. The reason of the names are, from one being of opinion that God in ordaining the elect and reprobate, considered man as before the fall, and the other as fallen and in a state of guilt.

The first say, that in laying down a plan, what is last in the execution is first in the intention, that God purposed to glorify his mercy and justice in the everlasting felicity of some, called vessels of mercy; and in the everlasting perdition of others, called vessels of wrath. That to accomplish this purpose he resolved to create the world, to put man in a condition in which he would certainly fall; to send the Redeemer in the fulness of time to carry on the whole plan of salvation, as we now find it in the oracles of truth.

The Sublapsarians say, that the order of purpose-

ing should be the same as the order of execution. That the decrees of God being eternal, there can no order of time be applied to them, but that which takes place in the execution. Therefore they say, that God proposed to make man innocent and holy, with powers to preserve his innocence, but liable to fall: that he foresaw the fall, and permitted it, and from the corrupted mass freely chose some as the objects of mercy, and left others to perish in the ruins of their apostasy, and that to accomplish this purpose he resolved to send the Saviour, &c.

It is easy to say something very plausible on each side of the question between the two. It seems very strong what Sublapsarians say, that the idea of time and order belongs only to the execution; but why do they also speak of order, when it is certain that, as far as we can clearly speak of design or purpose at all, the means seem to be designed for the end, and not the end for the means? The Supralapsarians have also this evident advantage of all the rest, that they have the sovereignty of God *directly*, for what all the rest are obliged to come to *at last*. It must be observed, that the strongest Supralapsarians do constantly assert the holiness and justice of the divine providence. If you ask them how they reconcile the divine justice with the absolute and certain event, they confess they cannot explain it; but they affirm that all that the others say to this is perfectly trifling, and less reasonable than their confession of ignorance.

The Arminians say, that God decreed to create man innocent; and that after he had fallen he resolved for satisfaction to justice to appoint a Saviour;

that he decreed to save those that should believe and repent ; to give to all sufficient grace for that purpose ; and finally to save and reward those who should endure to the end. It is plain that whatever reason they may offer with great plausibleness for several things, when taken in a separate and detached view, nothing can be weaker than the Arminian scheme, considered as a system of the divine purpose, because they leave out or suspend the purpose at every stage.

As to the Socinians, they do generally deny the reality of the decrees altogether, and say that the event is wholly uncertain, and suspended upon the will of the creature ; as many of them as maintain or admit the foreknowledge of God, do it contrary to their other principles.

If I were to say any thing upon this subject, (I mean the order of the decrees) I would say nearly as Pulit in his System, as contained in the notes upon Rulet, has said, which is in substance this, that God resolved from all eternity to manifest his own glory, and illustrate his moral excellencce, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, in the production and government of a created system. That for this purpose the whole system, and all the facts of which it consists, and their dependence one upon another, and the order itself in which they were to take plac, were ordained. If the whole, then certainly every particular part as fully as the whole, is the object of one absolute decree. In this view they are all upon a footing ; at the same time we do not pretend to dispute that things are ordain-

ed with considerable difference; but this difference it is hard or impossible for us to explain. There is certainly a difference between the ordination of things natural, and those which are sinful or holy. The very sinful disposition, considered as becoming a part of the general plan, is certainly as holy an ordination as any other, yet the Scripture teaches us to consider this as a thing quite different from God's determining to send his Son into the world to save sinners. It seems to be a matter insisted on in the strongest manner in Scripture, that the evil or guilt of every creature is to be ascribed to the creature, as to its proper and adequate cause; at the same time it seems fully as plain, that whatever connexion there may be between one evil and another, the choice of the vessels of mercy is free and unconditional, and that the rejection of others is imputed to the sovereignty of God, Luke x. 21. John xii. 39. That the choice of the vessels of mercy is free and sovereign, appears from the words of Scripture; from their universal state, dead in trespasses and sins; from their visible character, and from the means of their recovery, I mean the omnipotence of divine grace.

LECTURE XIII.

I Now proceed to the *third* thing upon this subject, which was to consider the character, qualities, and attributes of the decrees of God, as they are given to them in Scripture in express terms, or manifestly founded upon Scripture truths, and par-

ticularly upon such truths as relate to the decrees. Of this the chief are what follow.

1. **Eternity.** We have express mention made, Eph. iii. 11. of God's eternal purpose; and believers are said to be chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. The last expression is of the same import with the first; for whatever is before the beginning of time, is to be considered as eternal. This indeed is essential to the divine purpose, inseparable from the very meaning of the word *decree*; and, if I am not mistaken, one of the chief things we are to be taught by it is, that whatsoever comes to pass in revolving years, is not loose, but was fixed in the divine mind before time itself began. It is exceeding difficult, however, at once to restrain an improper curiosity, and to speak with precision on the subject, and with safety. Some have raised a question, whether there is not a necessity of supposing the existence and the nature of God, as previous to his decrees. To which it is commonly said, that there is a priority of order, though not of time; a priority like that of the cause to its inseparable effect; as the sun is the cause of light, yet the creation of the sun would not be before or antecedent to the light; they are inseparable and necessarily existent. One would think there was nothing amiss in this way of speaking, or of saying in consequence of it, that the decrees are to God's nature as an eternal effect to an eternal cause; and yet I am afraid there is here what we find in many subjects of theology, a mixture of repugnant ideas intricate and difficult, eternity, and time—beginning and no beginning. When we speak of an effect of

a cause, we cannot do otherwise than think of something produced, some alteration, or something that was not before. This is the case with all the similitudes brought to illustrate it, as the creation of the sun and the co-existence of light; or another made use of by some of the refined Arians, who meant to say the Son is produced by the Father, as an eternal effect of an eternal cause; as the print of a man's foot in the sand is caused by his setting down his foot, but not posterior in point of time. But all this is truly absurd when speaking of God, because it includes some definite idea of what might and did begin to take place. I should be apt to think, that one of the chief reasons why any thing is revealed to us concerning the decrees of God, is to give us an awful impression of his infinite majesty, his supreme dominion, and the absolute dependence of every creature upon him; so that it is enough for us to say, that his purpose is before all worlds, antecedent to all time or the idea of succession, being indeed entirely inseparable from the idea of his existence.

2. The next thing to be considered is the liberty of God in his decrees. They are according to the council of his own will. Almost all the systems say, that God did most wisely, most justly, and most freely decree whatsoever comes to pass.

The chief objection to this arises from what used to be called many years ago the *Beltislian* scheme, of which, whatever chance-traces may be seen in former authors, Leibnitz is the proper author. Of this scheme it is the leading part, or rather the foundation of the whole, to say that God, infinitely

wise and good, must necessarily chuse the best in every thing. That, therefore, of all possible systems, this which he has chosen, because it has taken place, must necessarily be the best, and he could not chuse any other; so that from the unalterable rectitude of his nature, he is as invariably determined by his necessity as any of his creatures. This boasted demonstration would be defensible, perhaps, were it not that its very foundations are good for nothing. Its ideas are not applicable to the divine Being; better and best are definite terms, and actual comparisons. We say a thing is better, when it is preferable to some others; and best, when it is a thing absolutely preferable to all others. Now with what propriety can it be said, that in the plans that were possible to infinite wisdom and power, there is one best. Have we comprehension sufficient to see this, and therefore to say it? It seems to me that a demonstration might be given to the contrary. The whole system of creation is either finite and temporal, or infinite and eternal. If it be finite, it seems absurd to say that it would not be made better by being made larger and similar; and if it was not from eternity, it might have been made many thousands of years sooner. If, on the contrary, it be infinite and eternal, the possible combinations of an infinite system are truly infinite, and there cannot be a best. The patrons of this scheme, when pressed with these difficulties, have recourse to what they should have begun with, the incomprehensibility of time and space, and say that we cannot apply any of the ideas of sooner or later to eternity,

or larger or lesser to space. The impossibility of uniting infinite to definite qualities, should have prevented them from saying, that of all possible systems infinite wisdom must chuse the best; but when we speak of time and space, nothing is more clear than that if at any time a thing has existed ten years, I can suppose that it existed twenty years; and that if any thing be of finite extent, I can suppose it enlarged as well as diminished. So great is the obstinacy of people in adhering to their systems, that Dr Clark reduces an antagonist to the absurdity of affirming, that though the universe were moved ten millions of leagues in any direction, it would still be in the same place; and another writer of some note says, either that the thing is impossible that the world could have been created sooner than it was, or that if it had been created 5000 years sooner, yet it would have been created at the same time. Besides, this scheme seems to me to labour under two great and obvious difficulties, that the infinite God should set limits to himself by the production of a created system—It brings creation a great deal too near the Creator to say it is the alternative of Omnipotence. The other difficulty is, that it seems to make something which I do not know how to express otherwise than by the ancient Stoical fate, antecedent and superior even to God himself: I would therefore think it best to say, with the current of orthodox divines, that God was perfectly free in his purpose and providence, and that there is no reason to be sought for the one or the other beyond himself.

Let us consider the wisdom and sovereignty of

his decrees. I put these together, not that they are the same, but that they seem, though not opposite, to limit each other in their exercise, and the one of which is often to be resolved into the other. Wisdom is ascribed to the decrees of God; or rather, wisdom indeed is particularly ascribed to God himself, as one of his essential perfections, and therefore, by necessary consequence, it must belong to his providence in time, and his purposes from eternity. The meaning of this, as far as we can conceive, when used by us is, that the best and noblest ends are designed, and the best and most suitable means in accomplishing these ends. And indeed all the wisdom that appears in the works and ways of God when carried into effect, must be supposed in the original purpose. But how shall we join the sovereignty with this? Sovereignty seems to resolve the whole into mere will, and therefore to stand opposed to the wisdom of the proceeding. Accordingly there are some who, in speaking of the decrees, rest them entirely and totally on the sovereignty of God, and say that not only the reasons are not made known and unsearchable to us, but that there is no reason at all of the preference of one thing to another, but the divine will. There have been some writers who have founded the very nature of virtue and vice upon the divine will. Those who think otherwise usually say, it is making the decrees not absolute only, but arbitrary; not only unsearchable, but unreasonable: and indeed the founding every thing upon mere will, seems to take away the moral character of the Deity, and to leave us no meaning when we say God is infinitely wise

and holy, just and good. I am however inclined to think, that those who have gone the furthest upon the sovereignty of God, only meant that we could not, or ought not to dive into the reason of the divine Providence; that his will ought to bound all our inquiries, and be a full and satisfactory answer to all our difficulties; and if it be taken in this way, it will not be easy to overthrow it.

If we look into the Scripture doctrine upon this subject, we shall, if I mistake not, see both the wisdom and sovereignty of God asserted in the strongest terms, united together and founded upon one another, Job ix. 4. "He is wise in heart;" he is said to be God only wise, Rev. xvi. 27. 1 Tim. i. 15. Jude 25. Eph. iii. 10. and Rom. xi. 38. speaking expressly of the decrees, "O the depth," &c. at the same time the sovereignty of God is asserted, and events resolved into it, Luke x. 21. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit," &c. I would here call your attention to two passages very remarkable, one in the Old Testament, the other in the New. The book of Job, it is agreed by interpreters, was composed expressly upon the difficulty of Providence, arising from the afflictions of good men, and the prosperity of the wicked; but in that book, after the reasoning of Job and his friends, when God himself is brought in speaking out of the whirlwind, in the 38th and 39th chapters, he says not one word either of the wisdom or justice of his proceedings, but in language infinitely majestic, displays and dwells upon the greatness of his power. It is true, indeed, the beautiful poetical display of the order of creation, may be said to imply in it wisdom as well

as power; but if so, all that is there advanced, is to illustrate the power and wisdom of the Creator, and by that means to impose silence on the rash challenges of the creature.

The other example is from the New Testament, where the apostle, after introducing an objection against the divine purpose as to the state of man, does not offer any other reason, but has recourse to the sovereignty of God, Rom. vii. 18, 19, 20. "Therefore it is not of him that willeth," &c.

It will be perhaps hard or impossible for you to enter into this at once, as I confess it was to me in early life; but I now see more of the necessity of subjecting ourselves to the divine sovereignty, and making use of it to restrain and repress our rash and curious inquiries. It is finely imagined in Milton, that he makes a part of the damned in hell to torment themselves with unsearchable questions about fixed fate, foreknowledge absolute. It is certain that we cannot now fathom those subjects, if we ever shall to eternity. As I hinted formerly, it is of considerable use to observe the analogy there is between the course of nature, providence, and grace. There are a vast number of things in which we must needs resolve the last question, so to speak, into the sovereignty of God. Why did God see it fit to people this world so very thinly? Why does the improvement of human arts proceed so very imperfectly? Why is the chief blessing that God ever bestowed, yet unknown to a vast number of the human race? The state of a savage tribe and of a cultivated society, how do they differ in the same climate? Why was so great a part of this vast con-

continent for so many ages a howling wilderness, a dwelling for wild beasts, and a few human creatures little less savage than they? Why is one person born into the world a slave, and another a monarch? Even with regard to morals, which are the source of the highest dignity and the highest happiness, I could suppose one born in a great but profligate family, supplied with all the means of indulgence, solicited by the worst examples, and beset by interested flatterers; and I could suppose another born of pious parents, with the most amiable example, the most careful instruction, the most regular government—why are there so vast advantages given to the one, and so hard a trial imposed on the other? Must we not say, “Even so, Father,” &c. In temporal and spiritual, natural and personal circumstances, there is every where to be seen much of the sovereignty of God.

IV. The next character of God's decrees is, that they are just, and that they are holy. He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; and it is the union of righteousness and holiness with the most unsearchable depth of wisdom, that gives occasion to the adoration, Rev. xiii. 8. “Great and marvellous,” &c. Nothing can be more manifest, than that all the calamities which God in his providence inflicts on earth, and the future judgments which he will inflict on the ungodly are represented as acts of justice. The only difficulty or objection that lies in the way of this, arises from the next particular, to which we will therefore proceed, viz.

V. That the decrees of God are fixed, absolute,

and unchangeable. That which he hath ordained shall certainly come to pass, and nothing can oppose it, subvert it, or take its place. Here, then, the difficulty rises full upon us; how shall we reconcile this with the free agency of the creature, with the guilt of sin, or the righteousness of the punishment of sin? yet this is affirmed by all sound divines, as in the Confession of Faith, chap. iii. § 1. "God from all eternity did by the most holy and wise counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." This subject has exercised the reason of men in all ages, so far as it has been proposed to them, but particularly that of divines. The subject is dark and intricate, as any body may easily perceive.

It is remarkable what weak things sometimes men of sense will say upon such subjects, when it seems necessary to them to say something in favour of their own hypothesis. One writer proposes to himself to reconcile this difference, and says, God foresees and predetermines actions in different ways, and each according to its own nature; that he foresees necessary actions as necessary, free actions as free, and contingent events as contingent. This is just saying nothing at all, and it had been better to have said nothing than to have said it. Every body knows, that as far as these different kinds of actions and events take place in the system, they are so ordained of God; but it behoved this author to shew

how any action could be free, or any event contingent, upon the supposition of the divine providence or decree.

Others have attempted to solve the difficulty by founding the decrees upon foreknowledge, and this upon God's distinct and perfect view of every person's disposition, and how men will determine in every circumstance in which they can be placed. But this is liable to two objections, first, That foreknowledge makes no difference as to decrees; for whether God considered the thing as a consequence of another or not, if he foresaw the consequence, he admitted and ordained that event as a part of the general system. The other objection is, that it takes for granted the system of what is called moral necessity, which brings back the same difficulty with redoubled force. It is remarkable that the advocates for necessity have adopted a distinction made use of for other purposes, and forced it into their service, I mean moral and natural necessity. They say natural or physical necessity takes away liberty, but moral necessity does not; at the same time, they explain moral necessity so as to make it truly physical or natural. That is physical necessity which is the invincible effect of the law of nature, and it is neither less natural nor less unshunnable, if it is from the laws of spirit, than it would be if it were from the laws of matter. To see how some people are lost upon these subjects, you may observe that the great argument that men are determined by the strongest motives, is a mere equivocation, and what logicians call *petitio principii*. It is impossible even to produce any medium of proof

that it is the strongest motive, except that it has prevailed. It is not the greatest in itself, nor does it seem to be in all respects strongest to the agent; but you say it appears strongest in the mean time— Why? Because you were determined by it: alas! you promised to prove that I was determined by the *strongest motive*, and you have only shewn that I had a *motive* when I acted. But what has determined you then? can any effect be without a cause? I answer, Supposing my self-determining power to exist, it is as real a cause of its proper and distinguishing effect, as your moral necessity; so that the matter just comes to a stand, and is but one and the same thing on one side and on the other.

But even suppose the system of necessity true, the difficulty of reconciling it with the guilt of sin, and the righteousness of God's judgment, is as great as upon any supposition whatever. Others have made use of a metaphysical argument to reconcile foreknowledge with liberty. They say, when any thing is done in time, it only shews the futurity of the action, as the school-men say. It was a true proposition from all eternity, that such a thing would be done, and every truth being the object of the divine knowledge, God's foreseeing it was no more the cause of it than a man's seeing another do a thing at a distance is the cause of its being done. But even this does not satisfy the mind, as the difficulty arises from the certainty of the event itself, as being inconsistent with the freedom of the agent, not the way in which it comes to be known.

It deserves particular notice, that several able

writers have shewn, that with respect to the most difficult part of the decrees of God, all the several sects of Christians at bottom say the same thing, except that class of Socinians who deny the omniscience and foreknowledge of God altogether, and they are so directly opposite to the letter of Scripture, that they deserve no regard. The Arminians say, that God has decreed that all that he foresaw would believe and repent, should be saved; for which purpose all have sufficient grace given them. But could not Omnipotence have given them effectual grace to overcome their obstinacy? Yes, without doubt. And are there not some that had as obstinate and profligate natures as those that perish, overcome by divine power? Yes, it is not easy to deny this—that he did not give the effectual grace to some, and gave it to others. So that they must at last say, “Even so, Father,” &c.

It is more easy to shew that the Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians are at bottom of the same principle. All then have this difficulty before them—to account for the divine purpose consistently with the guilt of sin.

But I would go a little farther and say, the difficulty is the same in natural as it is in revealed religion, and the same in the course of nature as in both. The certainty of events makes as much against common diligence in the affairs of life, as against diligence in religion. The fates which the Stoics of old held, was called the *ignava ratio* of the Stoics.

For my own part I freely own, that I could never see any thing satisfactory in the attempts of divines

or metaphysicians to reconcile these two things; but it does not appear difficult to me to believe precisely in the form of our Confession of Faith; to believe both the certainty of God's purpose, and the free agency of the creature. Nor does my being unable to explain these doctrines, form an objection against one or the other.



LECTURE XIV.

Of the Covenant of Works, and the Fall of Man.

THIS seems to be the next thing in order. That I may treat of it as concisely as possible, I will make the following observations.

1. It is justly and properly by divines considered as a covenant. The word *covenant* is not indeed made use of by Moses in giving the history of the fall, for which many reasons may be assigned. The Scripture does not so much limit the phrase, as fix the thing itself, which we now express by it. The word *covenant* is used with latitude in Scripture. Thus, Jer. xxxiii. 20. 25. "Thus saith the Lord, if you can break my covenant," &c. It may be observed, that there must of necessity be some impropriety in calling any transaction between God and man *a covenant*, because it must differ considerably from an engagement of persons equal and free. But as far as there can be a covenant relation between God and man, it evidently took place here. The giving a special command, with a threatening annexed, does evidently imply in it such a covenant.

2. It seems just and proper to suppose, that merely abstaining from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, was not the only duty prescribed and demanded by God, but that the demand extended to universal obedience.

The Jewish Rabbies say that God gave Adam six precepts: 1. To worship God; 2. To do justice; 3. Not to shed human blood; 4. Not to make use of idols or images; 5. Not to commit rapine and fraud; 6. To avoid incest. But all this is without the least proof.

3. We may consider the choice of the command for trial, not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This may give occasion to many conjectures, and likewise to many solid remarks. It is conjectured by many, that the tree had in it a noisome quality that made the body liable to corruption, as God often orders his commands so, that obedience to them is of itself happiness, and disobedience is misery. If we suppose the eating this tree had nothing in itself either good or evil, and it is asked why God thought fit to suspend the fate of the human race on a positive precept? It may be answered, first, as an act of sovereignty, to which we have no right to object. 2. It might also be more proper for the trial of obedience, as the mere authority of God would be the sanction. 3. It was a just and natural acknowledgment that the creature held all created comforts of God. 4. There were then so few relations, that there could be no trial upon the precepts of the second table.

4. It appears that Adam, in the covenant of works, was to be considered as the federal head and

representative of the human race, as he was then the natural head. By the manner in which the human race was to descend from him, the punishment inflicted upon him must of course descend to them. If we suppose that God might justly create an order of beings like to what man is, to descend from one another, and to propagate the nature which he had, the matter could not have fallen out otherwise, in case of sin, than it did.

5. Let us consider the import of the threatening: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." That temporal death was to be understood by it, and all the sufferings preparatory to death, must necessarily be admitted. That it supposes also spiritual death, or the separation of the soul from God, is a necessary circumstance in the whole of this matter. The expression, Gen. iii. 22. "Behold the man is become like one of us," &c. is by no means to be taken as if God was afraid they would eat of the tree of life, and thereby become immortal. The greatest part of interpreters consider these words as spoken by way of derision; and as it is also probable that this tree had much in it of a health-giving quality, it was not proper that men devoted to so many sufferings should be permitted the use of it. And as a sacrament, it was to be refused to those who had broken the covenant, and were therefore unworthy of the sign.

Of the Fall.

BEFORE we speak farther of the fall of man by the breach of the covenant of works, it may be

expected that we should consider a little the introduction of sin or moral evil in general. Why did God permit sin, and the train of evils that follow it? This has been a question that has exercised inquirers from the beginning, and especially under the gospel. I have treated a little upon this in the discourse upon the decrees, and shall only further drop a few hints. Some say that it was a necessary consequence of creating free agents; but there are many objections to this. It is neither certain that it was a necessary consequence, nor that there is any such worth in the free agency of the creature as to deserve to be preserved, at the price of this evil and its train. Some have said that the evil, natural and moral, was necessary to the perfection of the whole, as the shade of a picture to the beauty of the whole piece. This is the substance of the Belistian scheme, the foundation of which I mentioned before, with the objections against it. I shall now only add, that upon this system it is necessary to suppose that all the good, natural and moral, that the universe could possibly admit, is to be found in it. This is exceedingly difficult to believe from appearances, and it is impossible to support it without laying God himself under the chains of necessity. It is certainly infinitely preferable to take Scripture truths just as they stand: that God is infinitely holy; has testified his abhorrence to sin, and therefore cannot be the author of it; that he has, notwithstanding, most justly permitted it; and that he will illustrate his own glory by it; but that the disposition of his providence and grace is to us unsearchable.

There is mention made in Scripture of the angels that sinned ; from which it appears that sin was introduced among them. The Scriptures have not informed us of many circumstances on this subject, which, as usual, men of fertile inventions have endeavoured to supply by conjectures, or to determine from very slender evidence. Some have even presumed to determine the number of the fallen angels, or at least their proportion to those that stood, from Rev. xii. 3, 4. " And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." But this is a misapplication of the passage in that prophecy, which belongs to the visible church on earth. Some have said that the sin of the angels was envy, some impiety or lust, but the greater number pride ; and this last seems to have the most truth in it, not because we know any thing certain of the circumstances of their rebellion, but because pride or self-sufficiency seems to be the essence or ruling part of all our sin.

We do not know the time of their fall, nor indeed with much certainty the time of their creation. We only know that their fall was before that of man ; and that God passed by the angels that sinned ; and that they are reserved in chains under darkness, to the judgment of the great day.

Some have exercised themselves in conjecturing how long our first parents continued in the state of innocence. Some suppose they fell upon the first day of their creation ; others, that they continued

in innocence ſome years. There is nothing ſaid in the book of *Genesis* that can determine this point with certainty, nor is it of much moment could it be determined.

Eve is ſaid to have been tempted by the ſerpent, and by many paſſages of Scripture it is put beyond a doubt, that it was by the devil or prince of the fallen angels. It ought not to be underſtood allegorically. Probably he made uſe of this creature as the fitteſt form in which he could appear. Many have ſuppoſed it was one of the bright fiery ſerpents that are ſeen in Arabia, and ſome parts of the Eaſt, and that he appeared to Eve as an angel, which would the more eaſily account for the deception. If this opinion is embraced, we muſt however ſuppoſe that the ſerpent was more glorious before the fall than ſince in his appearance; and indeed it is probable that moſt, or all the creatures, were more excellent in their kind before than after the fall.

But what we are chiefly to attend to, is the conſequence of the fall upon Adam and his poſterity. As to themſelves, they loſt a great part of the image of God, in which they were created. They became the objects of divine diſpleaſure; their eyes were opened, and they felt ſhame for their nakedneſs; were ſtruck with the alarm of an evil conſcience; were driven from the terreſtrial paradife; expoſed to many ſufferings which were to end in death; and obliged to labour on the accuſed ground. Some few of the ancients have believed that our firſt parents periſhed eternally; but that has been far from the general belief, which has been, that as the firſt

promise was made to them, they understood and improved it, and received consolation by it.

As to the effect of Adam's sin upon his posterity, it seems very plain that the state of corruption and wickedness which men are now in, is stated in Scripture as being the effect and punishment of Adam's first sin; upon which it will be sufficient to read the epistle to the Romans, chap. v. from the 12th verse and onward. And indeed when we consider the universality of the effects of the fall, it is not to be accounted for any other way, than from Adam's being the federal head of the human race, and they sinning in him, and falling with him in his first transgression.

The first and chief of these effects is the corruption of our nature—that man now comes into the world in a state of impurity or moral defilement. We will first consider the Scripture proof of original sin, and then say, as far as we have warrant from Scripture, what it is, and the manner of its communication.

I shall first mention the following passages of Scripture: Gen. v. 6. 21. "And God saw," &c. Psal. li. 5. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity," &c. John iii. 6. "That which is born," &c. Rom. viii. 7, 8. Eph. ii. 3. "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

After considering the above passages, let me observe to you that in this, as in most subjects, the general strain of the Scripture is fully as convincing as particular passages. The universal command of making atonement; children receiving the badge of the covenant; the tenor of the promises, "I will

take away the stony heart out of your flesh;" the force of the Psalmist David's prayer, "Create within me a clean heart;" and many others of the same import, but, above all, this doctrine of our Saviour, John iii. 3. "Verily, verily," &c. To all this you may add experience. The universal and early corruption of men in practice, is a standing evidence of the impurity of their original.

What is the history of the world but the history of human guilt? and do not children, from the first dawn of reason, shew that they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge?

As to the nature of original sin, and the transmission of it, I think a few words may suffice. We certainly discover in mankind, not only a disposition without restraint to commit errors of a gross nature, but in general an attachment to, and love of the creature more than the Creator. It may not be improper here to consider the question, whether the whole nature is corrupt, so that whatever we do is sin. It will be, I think, very easy to settle this point, if the meaning of the inquiry be clearly understood. If the supreme desire of the mind, and leading principle be wrong, then every thing that is directed by it must have the nature of sin.

Those who represent it in this light, do by no means assert that every act in every part of it is evil; such as, to speak truth, to do justice, to shew mercy, which certainly an unholy man may do. Nay, I suppose even the greatest sinner that ever was, speaks twenty true words where he speaks one that is false. But what is meant to be asserted is, that every action of an unregenerate man is es-

essentially defective as a moral duty, because flowing from a wrong principle, and tending to a wrong end. Let us suppose a man inflexibly sober and temperate from a concern for his health, or a covetous desire of sparing his money, and one should say there is no true virtue in this. It would be ridiculous to say, that we affirmed that sobriety was not a virtue, or that the person concerned sinned in being sober. This will appear by expressing the sentiment in another form. Every body would understand and approve it, if we should say, there is no virtue at all in that miser who starves his belly, or clothes himself with rags, only to fill his purse.

As to the transmission of original sin, the question is to be sure difficult, and we ought to be reserved upon the subject. St Augustine said it was of more consequence to know how we are delivered from sin by Christ, than how we derive it from Adam. Yet we shall say a few words on this topic. It seems to be agreed by the greatest part, that the soul is not derived from our parents by natural generation, and yet it seems not reasonable to suppose that the soul is created impure. Therefore it should follow, that a general corruption is communicated by the body, and that there is so close a union between the soul and body,—that the impressions conveyed to us through the bodily organs, do tend to attach the affections of the soul to things earthly and sensual. If it should be said that the soul, on this supposition, must be united to the body as an act of punishment or severity, I would answer, that the soul is united to the body in consequence of an act of government, by which the

Creator decreed, that men should be propagated by way of natural generation. And many have supposed, that the souls of all men that ever shall be, were created at the beginning of the world, and gradually came to the exercise of their powers, as the bodies came into existence to which they belong.

LECTURE XV.

Of Sin in general, and its Demerit ; and of Actual Sin, and its several Divisions.

OF sin in general, and moral evil, we may observe, that the Scripture uniformly represents it to us in the most odious light. Of God it is said, “ He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.” It is said to be that which his soul hates ; to grieve him, to dishonour him, and to provoke his wrath. And though we must exclude from our minds every thing, in these frequent expressions, that belong to human passions or weakness, the just and legitimate inference to be drawn from it is, the great and unspeakable evil of sin.

As the evil of sin appears from every page of the sacred oracles, so it also appears in the clearest manner from its effects, and the misery that follows it. All natural evils are the fruits of sin ; all the sufferings in the valley of terror shoot from it. And if we lay down the righteousness of Providence as a principle, Dr Butler has shewn in his Analogy, that the punishment, and therefore the guilt of sin, is

very great; that sometimes very great and lasting sufferings are the consequence of acts one would think not the most atrocious. The contagion of sin, the rage of violent passion, and the terror of conscience, in some instances, all tend to prove the evil of sin.

One can scarcely have a clearer idea of the evil of sin, than by comparing the effects of piety and virtue, so far as our own experience has enabled us to form an idea of them, with the effects of universal corruption and depravity in any society.

Here, perhaps, it may be proper just to mention the question, whether it is proper to say there is an infinite evil in sin? I would answer it thus, There is not a single argument against it, only this, that the actions done in time by a finite creature, cannot have in them an infinite evil. But this is not the thing denied, for all the systems with one voice say, that it is not infinite in all respects, otherwise all sins would be equal, which indeed it is said that the Stoics anciently have held. But as far as there can be meaning to us in the expression, it must be proper to say the evil of sin is infinite; not only because when we consider the several particulars that illustrate the evil of it, we see no end to them, but because sin is properly an opposition to the nature, and a transgression of the law of God. Now his nature being infinitely excellent, and the obligation on us arising from his infinite perfections in himself, his full property in, and absolute dominion over us, being inconceivably great, I reckon that there must be the very same justice and propriety in saying

that there is an infinite evil in sin, as an infinite goodness in God.

Sin is explained in general in our Catechism to be a want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God. In this definition of sin, it is divided into sins of omission or of commission. The law of God is a perfect rule, and every deviation from it is sin, whether in the matter of the duty, or principle from which it ought to flow. An action, to be truly good, must be complete in all respects. Hence some observe, that actions truly good are equally good, because they are perfect, they completely fulfil the law, and are performed at the very time when it was required. But sins are not equally evil, some are very much aggravated in comparison of others from many circumstances easy to imagine. Let one just consider the distinction of sins, with a remark or two upon each. 1. Sins of omission and commission. We are not to suppose that sins of omission are constantly, and by their nature, less heinous than sins of commission. There are some duties so important, and the obligation to which are so strong and manifest, that the omission of them is an offence as much aggravated as any that can be named, and much more so than some sins of commission. A total and habitual neglect of God's worship, is certainly much more criminal than some rash injurious expressions, which are sins of commission. 2. Sins voluntary and involuntary. All sins may be said to be in some sense voluntary, as lying properly in the disposition of the heart and will. Some are of opinion, that original sin itself is voluntary, the corrupt bias from the corrupted

frame not taking away the liberty necessary to moral action, and the sin lying in the consent given to the solicitation. It is however certain, that all actual sin should be considered as voluntary, being so in its nature. But some sins are said to be involuntary, when they are from inattention, and sometimes when they are the effect of long habit, so that they are done without deliberation and without reflection. These are not any way excuseable on that account; because that want of attention is a very great sin, and the power of habit has been contracted by acts of wickedness.

3. There are some sins of ignorance, some against light; light in general is an aggravation of sin. Ignorance, total and invincible, takes away all sin; but ignorance may often be easily prevented; and sometimes ignorance may be so circumstanced as to aggravate sin, as when it arises from an aversion and hatred to the light. This is nearly connected with the opinion of the innocence of error. There are great numbers who will needs have it, that error in judgment cannot be criminal, if the person is sincerely of that opinion which he professes or avows. This is called by Bishop Warburton, the master prejudice of this age. But it is plain that error must just be considered as ignorance. To say that a person mistakes his duty with perfect innocence, is to suppose God has not given sufficient means of discovering and distinguishing truth from falsehood.

There are several other divisions of sins that may be introduced; such as sins in thought, in word, and in deed. Filthiness of the flesh and of the spi-

rit ; occasional and reigning fins. But as they have little difficulty in them, so the explanation of them is no way necessary to the explaining of evangelical truth ; for which reason I will not discuss them.

There are some maxims in estimating the morality of actions, that, though generally admitted, carry some difficulty in them when applied universally ; as for example, that a sin is the more highly aggravated when it is committed with little temptation ; and that a virtuous action is more laudable, when it overcomes the greatest temptations. If we extend this to inward, as well as outward temptation, which is commonly done, it seems to take much from the merit of true holiness in eminent saints, and to annihilate altogether the excellency of the divine holiness. The maxim must therefore either be a mistake or misapplied. One of the contraries that flows from it is certainly true, viz. that an action is not praise-worthy, in proportion as the contrary is vicious. It is one of the highest degrees of vice to be without natural affection, and to neglect the common care of family and relations ; but to take care of them, has but very little that is praise-worthy in it. Whenever we find difficulty in these things, it is but reasoning them up to the question of liberty and necessity, the dependence and activity of the creature, where we should always stop short, as being above our comprehension.

There is one thing very remarkable, that in the Scriptures the sin of our nature is always adduced as an aggravation of our guilt ; but loose persons in principle and in practice, are apt to produce it as an extenuation of the actual transgression which

proceeds from it. Nor, I believe, is there any way by which men can be taken off from such views, but by a thorough work of conviction, and the power of divine grace. Therefore a minister of great piety and judgment once said to me, "No man will cordially believe the doctrine of salvation by grace, contained in our Catechism and Confession, unless he is born of God. I can shew by reason, that the fall of man, and the corruption of our nature, is contained in the Scripture. I can shew that it is entirely correspondent with the course of nature and the system of Providence. But we need hardly expect that it will be received and approved till the pride of the heart is brought down, and the sinner laid at the footstool of divine mercy."

Another remark I shall make, and this also borrowed from a friend, that every error or departure from the truth might be traced back to a want of conviction, and not having a due sense of the evil of sin. Notwithstanding all the boast of concern for moral virtue, and the repeated objection that the doctrine of salvation by grace leads to licentiousness and favours immorality, it is an unhumiliated spirit that makes such persons oppose the truth. Self-righteousness is easily traced back to this; all the merit of works may be reduced to it. Had such persons a proper sense of the extent and spirituality of the law of God, they would never think of trusting in themselves that they are righteous; and did they feel the obligation upon every intelligent creature supremely to honour the living and true God, they would see the evil of refusing it, but would

never think of pleading any merit from an imperfect performance of that which is so perfectly due.

In the last place, as to the inability of man to recover himself by his own power, though I would never attempt to establish a metaphysical system of necessity, of which infidels avail themselves in opposition to all religion, nor presume to explain the influence of the Creator on the creature, yet nothing is more plain from Scripture, or better supported by daily experience, than that man by nature is in fact incapable of recovery without the power of God specially interposed. I will not call it a necessity arising from the irresistible laws of nature. I see it is not a necessity of the same kind as constraint; but I see it an impossibility such as the sinner never does overcome. A late author in Scotland thinks he has discovered the great wheel that connects the human system with the universal kingdom of God: that this race of creatures were suffered or ordained to come into existence, to be a standing monument to all other intelligences through the universe, that a rational creature once departing from his allegiance to his Creator, never could again recover it, but by his own almighty power and sovereign grace.

LECTURE XVI.

Of the Covenant of Grace.

WE now come to speak of the covenant of grace. This, taking it in a large sense, may be said to comprehend the whole plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. I am not to mention every thing that belongs to this subject; but before entering directly into the constitution of the covenant of grace, it will be proper to speak a little of the doctrine of satisfaction for the guilt of a creature.

As to the first of these—Was satisfaction or some atonement necessary? Would it have been inconsistent with divine justice to have pardoned sinners without it? Might not the sovereignty and mercy of God have dispensed with the punishment of sin, both in the sinner and in the Surety? The agitation of this question, and the zeal that is shewn by some upon it, I cannot help saying, seems to arise from an inward aversion to the truth itself of the satisfaction, and the consequences that follow from it. What does it signify, though any one should admit that God by his sovereignty might have dispensed with demanding satisfaction, if notwithstanding it appears in fact, that he has demanded and exacted it? “that without shedding of blood there is no remission,” and, “that there is no other name,” &c. Whether it has been so ordained, because to have done otherwise would have been inconsistent

with the divine perfections, or because so it seemed good unto God, seems at least an unnecessary, if not an indecent question. We have an infinite concern in what God has done, but none at all in what he might have done. On what is really difficult upon this subject, we may however make the few following remarks.

1. From its actually taking place as the will of God, we have good reason to say it was the wisest and best; the rather, that we find many of the highest encomiums on the divine perfections, as shewing in this great dispensation his power, wisdom, mercy, and justice. His wisdom in a particular manner is often celebrated, Eph. iii. 10. Rom. xi. 33. At the same time it is proper to observe the harmony of the divine attributes; that the justice of God appears more awful in the sufferings of Christ, than if the whole human race had been devoted to perdition; and his mercy more astonishing and more amiable in the gift of his Son, than it could have been in the total remission of all sin without any satisfaction, had it been possible.

2. There is a particular proof of the necessity of satisfaction that arises from the death of Christ, considered as intimately united with the divine nature, which it has been already proved that he possessed. Can we suppose that such a measure would have been taken, if it had not been necessary? Can we suppose that the eternal Son of God would have humbled himself thus, and been exposed to such a degree of temptation, and such amazing sufferings, if it had not been necessary?

3. All the accounts given us in Scripture of the nature of God, his perfections and government, confirm this supposition. The infinite justice and holiness of his nature are often mentioned in Scripture ; that he hates sin, and cannot look upon it but with abhorrence, and particularly that he will by no means spare the guilty. It is sometimes objected here, that justice differs from other attributes, and that its claims may be remitted, being due only to the person offended. But this, which applies in part to man, cannot at all be applied to God. I say it applies in part to man, because a matter of private right, independent of the public good, he may easily pass by. But it is not so with magistrates or public persons, nor even with private persons, when they take in the consideration of the whole. Besides, when we consider the controversy about the justice of God, and what it implies, we shall see the greatest reason to suppose what is called his vindictive justice, viz. a disposition to punish sin because it truly merits it, even independently of any consequence of the punishment, either for the reformation of the person, or as an example to others. The idea of justice and guilt carries this in it, and if it did not, there would be an apparent iniquity in punishing any person for a purpose different from his own good.

II. The second question upon the satisfaction is, whether it was just and proper to admit the substitution of an innocent person in the room of the guilty. This is what the Socinians combat with all their might. They say it is contrary to justice to punish an innocent person ; that God must al-

ways treat things as they really are, and therefore can never reckon it any proper atonement for sin, to punish one that never committed any sin. Before I state the reasoning in support of this fundamental doctrine of the gospel, I will first briefly point out the qualifications necessary in such a substitution.

1. The security undertaking must be willing: it would certainly be contrary to justice, to lay a punishment upon an innocent person without his consent.
2. He must be free and independent, having a right over his own life, so that he is not accountable to any other for the disposal of it.
3. The person having the demand must be satisfied and contented with the substitution, instead of personal punishment.
4. That the surety be truly able to make satisfaction in full.
5. That it be in all respects as useful, and that the sufferer be not lost to the Public.
6. Some add, that he be related to, and of the same nature with the guilty. This is generally added from the constitution of Christ's person, and in that instance surely has a great degree of suitability, but does not seem to me to be so necessary as the other particulars for establishing the general principle.

Now supposing all these circumstances, vicarious satisfaction for sin seems to me easily and perfectly justifiable. To make this appear, attend to the three following observations.

1. There is nothing in it at all contrary to justice. If any innocent person were punished against his will, or laid under a necessity of suffering for the cause of another, it would evidently be repugnant to the idea of justice. But when it is done, as by

the ſuppoſition, willingly and freely, injuſtice is wholly excluded. If we could indeed ſuppoſe ignorance and rathneſs in the undertaking, ſo that he conſented to what he did not underſtand, there would be injuſtice, but this alſo is wholly excluded in the caſe before us.

2. There is nothing in it contrary to utility, becauſe it has preciſely the ſame effect in demonſtrating the evil of ſin in the one caſe as in the other. In any human government, it certainly ſerves as much to ratify the law, and in many caſes the exacting the debt with rigour of a ſurety, is a more awful ſanction to the law than even the ſatisfaction of the offending party. We have not in all hiſtory, I think, an inſtance of this kind ſo ſtriking as the lawgiver of the Locrians, who had made a law that adultery ſhould be puniſhed with the loſs of both the eyes. His own ſon was ſhortly after convicted of the crime; and, to fulfil the law, he ſuffered one of his own eyes to be put out, and one of his ſons. Every body muſt perceive, that ſuch an example was a greater terror to others, than if the law had been literally inflicted on the offender. After having mentioned theſe two particulars, I obſerve, that the thing is in a moſt preciſe and exact manner laid down in Scripture. It is impoſſible to invent expreſſions that are either more ſtrong or more definite than are there to be found. It is an obſervation of ſome of the Socinian writers, that the word *ſatisfaction* is not to be found in Scripture, and in this they often triumph; but nothing can be more ridiculous, for ſatisfaction is a modern term of art, and unknown in that ſenſe to antiquity.

But can there be any thing more plain, than that it is intended to express the very meaning so fully and so variously expressed, both in the Scriptures and the heathen writers? The word in the Old Testament most frequently used is *atonement*, making atonement for sin, or for the soul. What could be more plain than not only the great day of atonement, but the daily sacrifice, in which certain men were appointed to represent the people of Israel, and lay their hands on the head of the devoted beast, and confess the sins of the people, which had not any other intelligible meaning, than the transferring the guilt from the sinner to the victim? The sprinkling the blood in the Old Testament upon the horns of the altar, whence by allusion the blood of Christ is called the blood of sprinkling, carries this truth in it in the plainest manner; and the prophecies of Isaiah, chap. liii. 5. "He was wounded for our transgression," &c. "When he shall give his soul an offering for sin," &c. But were there the least obscurity in the type, the truth as stated in the New Testament would put the matter out of all doubt. The expressions are so many that we cannot, and we need not enumerate them all: "Redeemed—bought with a price—redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ—This is my blood shed for many, for the remission of sins—he gave himself a ransom for all—unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

I would just add here, that as by the constitution of our nature, and our being made to descend in a certain succession by natural generation, there is a

communication of guilt and impurity from Adam, so we have in human society, and indeed inseparable from it, the idea of communication by natural relation, of honour and shame, happiness and misery, as well as the clearest notion of voluntary substitution. We see that the worth and eminent qualities of any person, give lustre and dignity to his posterity; and wickedness or baseness does just the contrary. We see that men may easily, and do necessarily receive much pleasure from the happiness of their relations, and misery in sympathy with their sufferings. And as to voluntary substitution, it is as familiar to us as any transaction in social life. It is true, there are not many instances of men's being bound in their life for one another; for which several good reasons may be assigned. There are not many men of such exalted generosity, as to be willing to forfeit life for life. It is rarely that this would be a proper or adequate satisfaction to the law, and it would not be the interest of human society commonly to receive it. Yet the thing is far from being inhuman or unpractised. There are some instances in ancient times, in which men have procured liberty for their friends, by being confined in their room. And both in ancient and modern times, hostages delivered by nations, or public societies, are obliged to abide the punishment due to their constituents.

3. The third question on the subject of satisfaction is, Whether it was necessary that the Redeemer or Mediator should be a divine person? It may be asked, whether an angel of the highest order, who was perfectly innocent, might not have made satis-

satisfaction for the sins of men? Perhaps this is one of the many questions in theology that are unnecessary or improper. It is sufficient to say that it appears either to have been necessary or best, that one truly divine should make satisfaction for sin, since it has been ordained of God, who does nothing unnecessary.

But besides this, it seems to be consonant to other parts of revealed religion, particularly the infinite evil of sin as committed against God, for which no finite being seems sufficient to atone. To which we may add, that all finite, dependent, created beings, are under such obligations themselves, that it is not easy to see what they can do in obedience to the will of God, which can have any merit in it, or which they would not be obliged to do for the purpose of his glory at any time; neither does any created being seem so much his own master, as to enter into any such undertaking.

There is an objection made to this doctrine, sometimes to the following purpose:—How could the second person of the ever blessed Trinity be said to make satisfaction? Was he not equally offended with the other? Could he make satisfaction to himself? But this objection is easily solved; for not to mention that we cannot transfer with safety every thing human to God, the thing in question is by no means unknown in human affairs. Though for the payment of a debt on which the creditor insists, it would be ridiculous to say that he might pay himself; yet in the character of a magistrate sitting to judge a criminal where he represents the Public, it is no way unsuitable for him to put off the public

person, and satisfy the demands of justice, and preserve the honour of the law.

Here I would conclude by just observing, that there is no necessity of a surety's doing just the same thing in kind that the guilty person was bound to do. The character and dignity of the surety may operate so far as to produce the legal effect, and make the satisfaction proper for giving its due honour to the law. Thus, in the sufferings of Christ, the infinite value of the Sufferer's person makes the sufferings to be considered as a just equivalent to the eternal sufferings of a finite creature.



LECTURE XVII.

LET us proceed to the constitution of the covenant; and you may observe that there is some difference among orthodox divines as to the way of stating the parties, and the terms of the covenant of grace. There seems to be mention made in Scripture of a covenant or agreement between the Father and the Son. This the generality of Calvinist divines consider as a separate or preparatory contract, and call it the covenant of redemption. Some, however, especially those who have been termed Antinomians, consider this as properly the covenant of grace, made with Christ the second Adam, as representing his spiritual seed, and the covenant said to be made with believers, to be only the execution or administration of that covenant, and therefore called a testament, being the fruits of Christ's death, or ratified by the death of the Testator. According

to the different ways of viewing this matter, they express themselves differently: the first saying that the condition of the covenant of grace is faith in Jesus Christ; and the other saying it is the righteousness of Christ. I do not apprehend there need be any difference between those now mentioned, and I observe Mr Willison in his Catechism takes it both ways. I shall first very shortly shew you from Scripture, that there is plainly mention made of a covenant, or a transaction between the Father and the Son, which, if distinct from the covenant of grace, may be properly enough called the covenant of redemption.

There are many promises made directly to the Mediator respecting this matter: Psal. ii. 6. "I declare the decree," &c. Isa. v. 3. 10. "When he shall make his soul," &c. Isa. xlii. 1. 6, 7. "Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Zech. vi. 13. "And the council of peace shall be between them both." I only further mention Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire," &c. The truth is, that not only the Socinians, who are enemies to the satisfaction of Christ, but even the Arminians decline the admission of this truth, and attempt to explain away the above texts; yet something equivalent to it is necessarily consequent upon Christ's undertaking. When he was constituted Mediator

by the divine decree, he must have assented to it, and freely undertaken the important charge. It is also evidently the spirit of the New Testament dispensation, that the hope and strength of believers are in Christ. He is said to have ascended up on high, and received gifts for men, and of his fulness we are said by the apostle John to receive grace for grace.

But the covenant of grace is said to be more frequently made with men, with the house of Israel, with the chosen of God, with his people. It is a compact or agreement between God and elect sinners, to give freely, and of mere mercy, Christ to die for them, and with him a pardon of sin, and a right to everlasting life, together with the Spirit of sanctification to make them meet for it; all which the believer receives and accepts in the manner in which it is offered, and rests his eternal state upon it. This transaction has many different titles given it in Scripture. It is called the *covenant of grace*, which is properly the theological phrase; a *covenant*, because it is often called so in the Old Testament and in the New, and *of grace*, because it is so often repeated in both, that salvation is of grace; and particularly in order to state the opposition between it and the covenant of works. It is also called a covenant of peace, and that with a double view: to distinguish it from the covenant of works, and from the covenant on Sinai at the giving of the law. It is called likewise an everlasting covenant, to distinguish it from any temporary covenant. It is also

called the *promise*, and the promise made of God unto our fathers.

In what I shall further offer upon it, it is my design, 1. To consider the constitution of the covenant, in its promises and conditions. 2. The various dispensations of it, and their relations to one another. 3. In what manner the gospel is to be preached agreeably to it, and what views of things are contrary to it.

As to the constitution of the covenant, you see the first and leading idea of it is, free and unmerited mercy; that sinners had deserved to perish; that divine justice pronounced their condemnation. This must lie at the foundation of the whole. It was for this reason that a Mediator was provided, and the Saviour is offered by God himself, as the fruit of his love: John iii. 16. "God so loved the world," &c. The freeness of salvation in the gospel is largely insisted on, and proved by the apostle in his epistle to the Romans, and particularly chap. iv. 16. speaking of the covenant under the title of the law of faith, he says, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace." This covenant is established by a Mediator, for every blessing comes to believers through Christ and for his sake, who is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. The promises of the covenant of grace may be taken in either view, more generally or more particularly. In general it procures deliverance from the wrath of God, and from every part of the curse of a broken law. Some also distinguish the promises generally into grace and glory, peace with God, happiness on earth, and the enjoyment of

God at last. But that I may state them in the way most proper for preaching the gospel, and carrying the message of peace, I shall enumerate them in the following order :—

1. The covenant promises Christ the Mediator to make satisfaction to divine justice by his sufferings and death. He was the promise made of God unto the fathers, and under the obscurity of the ancient dispensation, he was the hope of Israel, and the desire of all nations ; and when he was come into the world, he was called the Lord's Christ, and the salvation of God. So Simeon expressed himself, " Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," &c. And as the Redeemer appeared first as the object of faith to the ancient patriarchs, so to convinced sinners under the gospel, a Saviour is the first ground of consolation.

2. The covenant promises the full and free pardon of all sin through Christ, John i. 16. Isa. lv. 1. The forgiveness of sins is the doctrine which Christ commanded his disciples to preach to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, 1 Tim. i. 15. " This is a faithful saying," &c. The universality of the offer of mercy is what particularly distinguishes it, Matt. xi. 28. " Come unto me—and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out," &c. This seems to be indeed the preliminary mercy, that opens the way to every other, and it was in this view that the gospel was preached to the humble and needy : Luke iv. 18. " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," &c.

3. The covenant promises the spirit of sanctification to renew our nature, and form us for the service

of God, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Jer. xxxii. 40. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them," &c. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," &c. It is with a view to this that we are told, Acts v. 31. "That Christ was exalted," &c. I need not multiply passages to this purpose, for it is the constant testimony of the Scriptures, that any gracious disposition in believers is the work of God's holy Spirit, and therefore are they called the fruit of the Spirit. It is not only the bringing sinners again to God by repentance that is considered as the work of God's Spirit, but the continuance and increase of sanctification is attributed to their being an habitation of God through the Spirit: "I will live in them, and walk in them," &c.

4. The covenant promises the favour of God, and all its happy fruits, while in this life, 2 Cor. vi. 18. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord," &c. I need not here mention the particulars that fall under this head—deliverance from temptations, support under sufferings, the sanctified use of sufferings; because we are in one word assured that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God," and 1 Cor. xiii. 22. "For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos," &c.

5. In the last place, the covenant promises eternal life. We cannot say what would have been the fulness of that life which belonged to the first covenant; but it seems to be generally agreed, that the promise of a glorious immortality, contained in the gospel, is much greater and more valuable, than

that which was lost by the fall. Life and immortality are said to be brought to light by the gospel; and our Saviour is said to have entered into the holiest of all, as the first fruits of them that slept, and to have gone to prepare a place for them, that where he is, there they may be also.

Let us now speak of the conditions of the covenant of grace. As I hinted before, those who make the covenant of grace and covenant of redemption the same thing, say, the condition is Christ's perfect merit and obedience. Neither indeed is there any thing else that can be called the meritorious condition. Those who say that the covenant of grace was made with man, say that the condition is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is undoubtedly true, that faith interests us in Christ, and brings us really within the bond of the covenant. Faith alone brings us to it; for any thing else that might be considered as a condition, is only a promise of what God will do for his people. But to state this matter as clearly as I am able, whether there are conditions or not, or what are the conditions of the covenant of grace, depends entirely on the sense in which we take the word *condition*. If we take it as implying proper merit, or the plea or claim in justice for obtaining the promises, nothing can be plainer than that there is not, and cannot be of this kind, any condition but the voluntary, perfect, meritorious obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we take it as signifying any particular duty or performance; as the term on which the promise is suspended, as in the first covenant abstaining from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, it can scarcely

be said with propriety that it has a condition ; for the tenor of the covenant, in its promising part, is such, that every thing of this kind is promised as the work of God. Therefore many divines have asserted, that the gospel, strictly so called, has no condition, but consists wholly of free and gracious promises. (See this matter well stated in Witsius' Economy of the Covenants.) It is for this reason that it is often called a *testament*, even where we have it translated *covenant*.

But if condition is taken to signify a character, qualification, or what is necessary to fit us for everlasting life, then faith, repentance, new obedience, and final perseverance, are all conditions, but very improperly so called. Indeed, in this sense, the covenant of grace has as many conditions as the law has duties. Yet even in this view we are carefully to observe, that there is a difference in the constitution of the covenant of grace, between faith in the blood of the atonement, and its fruits, the various graces of the Christian life. For as the promises of the covenant contain, not only the free pardon of sin for Christ's sake, but also the spirit of sanctification, faith is the immediate instrument for receiving or laying hold of this mercy. If there is to man, properly speaking, a condition of the covenant, it must be faith, because this, renouncing all self-dependence, accepts and closes with the promise of recovery and salvation, just in the manner in which it is offered, freely, without money and without price. It is plainly stated in this manner in the epistle to the Romans: "Therefore it is by faith, that it may be by grace." "To him that worketh is the re-

ward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness." Faith indeed is highly proper for receiving the righteousness of Christ, because it gives the glory only to God. To suppose faith has any merit in it, is just as absurd as to suppose that a person, being wholly needy and helpless, his accepting the bounty of another is an evidence of his having abundance of his own.

As to the fruits of faith, or works of righteousness, no person can deny that they are the proper evidence of our relation to God; that they are the expressions of our love to him; that they are necessary to form us for his service, and fit us for his presence: but being the work of his Holy Spirit, and the accomplishment of his faithful promise, it is impossible that they should be, in any respect, conditions of the covenant of grace.

The promises of the covenant of grace are ranged in a certain order; they introduce and lead to one another; and they are to be received and applied precisely in the same order: Christ the Saviour, the free pardon of sin, a new nature as the work of his Spirit, increase of grace, a sanctified providence, victory over death, and the possession of everlasting life. These must take place just in the order I have mentioned them. If the order is inverted, the system is destroyed.

2. The second thing to be considered, is the various dispensations of the covenant, and their relation to one another. The covenant of grace in every dispensation differs from the covenant of works.

The covenant of works required perfect obedience, and one sin rendered it void. In the covenant of grace there is provision made, not only for reconciling the sinner, but for daily pardon to the believer. In the covenant of works every thing depends upon the personal conduct of the interested party ; in the covenant of grace there is a Mediator who lays his hands upon them both.

As to the dispensations of the covenant of grace, we may consider them as appearing before the law, under the law, and from the coming of Christ.

(1.) Before giving the law, we see the promise is made in the following terms : “ The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head ;” and to Abraham, “ In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” I think the promise, if not the covenant, was substantially made the same then as now. The apostle to the Galatians, iii. 17. thought the same thing, that the promise to Abraham was the New Testament promise, and that whatever the law had peculiar to itself, was posterior to the promise, “ And this I say, that the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ,” &c. The promise at that time, as now, was eternal life, as the apostle to the Hebrews plainly proves, Heb. xi. 13. “ These all died in faith,” &c. It is also plain, I think, that as the promise to the faith of the ancient patriarchs was in substance the same with ours, so their faith itself was also the same. It was a reliance on the mercy of God. It was that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for.

(2.) Under the law the covenant also was the

same in substance, as appears by the arguments just now hinted at. The only thing particular is to consider what was the import of the Sinai covenant, or the design of giving the law of Moses. Some, seeing that the Levitical law consists chiefly of temporal promises, are for supposing that dispensation quite distinct from the covenant of grace. They have even called the ten commandments given upon Mount Sinai, a republication of the law of nature, and of the covenant of works. A late celebrated writer, Dr Warburton, attempted to shew that Moses did not in the law give them any reason to expect eternal life, but confined both the promises and threatenings entirely to things temporal. Even to this author, probably, many have imputed more than he intended to affirm. Yet he certainly carries his arguments too far in supposing, that in none of the inspired writers of the Old Testament is eternal life proposed as the object of faith. This may be easily refuted; and indeed is in the book of Job so strongly refuted, that the author is forced into the extraordinary supposition of that book being as late as the Babylonish captivity, in order to rid himself of it. However, I think that it must be admitted, that temporal promises and threatenings make the most distinguished appearance in the Levitical law. This took place because it was designed as a typical dispensation, and to be a shadow of good things to come. It is plain, however, that the law of Moses did not provide an atonement for every crime, and supposed many sins which could not be expiated by the blood of bulls or of goats, for which the only

remedy was reliance on the mere mercy of God, in the exercise of true repentance; see Isa. i. 16, &c. lv. 1. "Ho! every one that thirsteth," &c.

The New Testament expressly tells us, that the law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; and the innumerable persons, and things, and ordinances, that were typical in it, need not be mentioned. The land of Canaan itself, and all the temporal promises preparatory to it, or in consequence of the possession of it, had a reference to the spiritual promises under the gospel, and doubtless the acceptance and salvation of them under the law, are upon the footing of the everlasting covenant, which began to be delivered before the law was given, and will continue till the final consummation of all things.

The moral law published upon Mount Sinai, must not be considered as a republication of the covenant of works, but a publication or summary of that immutable law of righteousness, which is the duty of creatures, and must accompany the administration of every covenant which God makes with man.

3. Since the coming of Christ, the covenant of grace is administered in a manner more full, clear, and efficacious, than in any of the former states. It was formerly administered in the name of, and by a promised Saviour; it is now administered in the name of, and by a risen Redeemer, who once suffered and now reigns in glory. The harmony of all the divine perfections in the great salvation, is more apparent now than formerly, and the preaching of the glad tidings of peace to sinners, is more explicit and more universal. What falls chiefly to

be confidered is, how far the former difpenfations are fufpended or abrogated by the coming of Chrift in the flefh. The covenant ratified by the death of Chrift is called a new covenant, in oppofition to that which is old and vanifhed away. Certainly the covenant is called new, in oppofition to the covenant of works, as the way of falvation was abrogated from the date of the firft promife, and both in the epiftles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, efpecially the two former, the gofpel or law of grace is oppofed to the law of works, meaning the firft covenant. And that I may fatisfy you of this, without entering into the endless criticisms upon particular paffages, obferve, that thofe who would by the law, underftand the law of Mofes, exclusive of the covenant of works, may be eafily confuted, for the apoftle fays, "that it is by faith, that it may be by grace;" that if juftification was by works, Abraham might have whereof to glory; and that the defign of this conftitution was, that no flefh might glory in God's prefence. The ceremonial law is undoubtedly abrogated, both from the exprefs declaration of Scripture, and from the nature and reafon of things. Chrift is now the end of the law for righteousnefs to every one that believeth. And as the whole fyftem of the Mofaic law was intended to typify the gofpel difpenfation when Chrift was actually come in the flefh, it muft fall of itfelf as unneceffary or hurtful.

There has been much controverfy, whether it was proper to fay that the moral law was abrogated, or to apply to that law what is faid of believers not being under the law but under grace. This matter,

one would think, might be easily reconciled; for doubtless the moral law, as a covenant of works, carrying a sentence of condemnation against every transgression, is abrogated. But the moral law, as the unalterable rule of duty to creatures, is antecedent to all covenants, and cannot be affected by them. The moral law, as it requires obedience to the will, and conformity to the nature of God, was binding on the angels before the creation of the world, and will be the duty of holy angels and redeemed sinners after the resurrection. But there is also another view of this subject—that the moral law is a part of the covenant of grace, in the hand of the Mediator. It is the promise of the covenant, that the law shall be written in our hearts; an unfeigned faith implies the acceptance of this as well as other promises, so that the believer not only remains under his original unchangeable obligation to keep the law, but comes under a new and peculiar obligation, which is to be discharged in his Redeemer's strength; so that, to take the thing properly, there is more obedience in the covenant of grace than in the covenant of works. The covenant of grace requires unfeigned subjection to every part of the same law, with this mortifying addition, that the believer receives it wholly as a condition of his acceptance, and ascribes it entirely to the riches of divine grace.

There is sometimes mention made of the political law of Moses, and it is demanded whether this is of perpetual obligation? The answer seems to be easy. It contains an excellent system of laws suited to the settlement of the Jews in Canaan, and many

principles of equity that may be of great use to other legislators ; but as the civil laws in general have only in view temporal property and convenience, they certainly are not unalterable, because they must be suited to the state of society, and other circumstances which may be very various. Sundry of the precepts also in the political law seem to have an allegorical meaning, and to have been made either with a view of suggesting or strengthening moral principles, or to be typical of gospel times ; as the precept, “ Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn,” “ Thou shalt not see the kid in its mother’s milk.” But we may observe, that the principles laid down in the criminal law are founded upon so much wisdom, that it is a question whether the departure from them in punishing of crimes has ever been attended with advantage : as for example, in regard to violence, the law of retaliation, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth ; in theft and fraud, restitution ; and the punishment of adultery with death.

What remains upon this subject, is only to point out in what manner the gospel is to be preached agreeably to it, and what views of things are contrary to it. To set this matter before you with as much distinctness and propriety as I am able, observe, that this gracious dispensation must be opened and pressed just as it is suited to the various conditions of those to whom it is addressed. These I shall divide into three great classes : 1. Secure or self-righteous persons. 2. Convinced sinners. 3. Professing believers.

1. Secure or self-righteous persons, who do not seem to have ever laid their eternal concerns to heart, or are building on some false foundation, as a form of godliness, or the merit of good works, or the comparative smallness of the sins of which they are guilty. To these it is necessary to preach the law in all its extent, and in all the force of its obligation. It is necessary to point out the evil of sin, the lost state of man by nature, and the absolute necessity of pardon through the blood of Christ, and renovation by his Spirit. It may be very proper for them and all others, to shew them the guilt and folly of particular sins, such as swearing, drunkenness, uncleanness. But if something more is not done, the evil is not searched to the bottom; for we ought to shew them that these are but the fruits of an unrenewed nature; that restraining, moderating, or even reforming a particular sin, is not enough, nor any evidence of a change from sin unto God. It is particularly proper in such cases to point out the extent and spirituality of the law, as reaching to the thoughts of the heart, so as, if possible, to shew them that they are guilty and helpless, and that there is no salvation in any but in Christ. This leads us to say,

2. That with regard to convinced sinners, it is particularly necessary to set before them the all-sufficiency of Christ, the fulness and freeness of that salvation which he purchased upon the cross, and offers in his word. To shew them that he has finished his work, and done every thing necessary to render it perfectly consistent with the justice and holiness of God to forgive even the chief of sinners.

But this will be best illustrated by pointing out some sentiments and views contrary to the freeness of salvation, and the plan of the gospel.

(1.) It is contrary to the freeness of salvation and to the covenant of grace, to extenuate sin, to have hard thoughts of God, of the strictness of his law, or the severity of its sanction. This arises from imperfect conviction of sin, which sometimes makes the sinner use some efforts to obtain salvation; but still he is apt to think he would have very hard measures if he was rejected. Imperfect convictions lead sinners to seek their comfort from the extenuation of sin, but true faith incites the sinner to give full force to the accusation, and to plead the benefit of the remission.

(2.) It is contrary to the freeness of salvation and to the tenor of the covenant of grace, to think that the greatness or atrociousness of sin should hinder our returning to God for obtaining mercy. This is one of the first reflections of a sinner under conviction, that he has sinned more than any other, and that another can sooner expect forgiveness than he. While this only serves to increase humiliation, and raise to the foundation every degree of self-confidence, its operation is salutary. But sometimes this arises from too rooted an adherence to some degree of human merit, as necessary to find favour with God, and then instead of compelling the sinner to rest in the infinite compassion of God, it makes him fall upon some scheme of purchasing salvation for himself; or if he finds this impracticable, perhaps he is plunged into the gulf of despair. In opposition to this, the new and well-ordered covenant

sends him to the infinite fulness of Christ for a free and complete pardon, and for deliverance from the power of his corruptions.

3. It is contrary to the freeness of salvation and the covenant of grace, to have any dependence on one's being comparatively less wicked than another. If the sinner's hope arises much from his having been free from this or that sin, he is resting on a legal foundation. This was a rock of perdition to the Pharisees. See how the Saviour has opposed this character to the other, Luke xviii. 11. "The Pharisee stood and prayed," &c. Not that God would represent it as a less safe state to attend to the exercises of religion, than to be an adulterer. But when men rest their dependence on their comparative goodness in themselves, it only serves to lead them away from an esteem and acceptance of divine mercy. On this account our Saviour says to the Pharisees, Matt. xxi. 31. "Verily I say unto you, the Publicans," &c. The sight of a great profligate deadens the sense of sin in the minds of many worldly persons, but in an humble penitent it only excites him to reflect upon the great principles of all sin in his own heart, and what he might have been, had not a restraining Providence and recovering grace been his preservation.

4. It is contrary to the freeness of salvation and the covenant of grace, to suppose that we may not, or must not lay hold of divine mercy, till we have done something ourselves in the way of duty and performance; till our penitential tears, or purposes of obedience, or begun reformation, entitle us to call it ours. No doubt self-denial, and experience

of the treachery of our own hearts, should fill us with humility and jealousy of ourselves; but the true way to reconcile the heart to duty, and to break the power of sin, is to rest our hope upon divine mercy for pardon, and on the promise in the covenant of the Holy Spirit to sanctify us wholly. Many retard their reformation, as well as obstruct their comfort, by yielding to a spirit of bondage and slavish fear. We should rather pray in the words of Zechariah, Luke i. 74. "That we being delivered," &c.

5. It is contrary to the freeness of salvation and the covenant of grace, to boast of our own righteousness, or in any degree to trust in our own strength. The motto of a Christian should be in the words of the prophet, Isa. xlv. 24. "Surely, shall one say," &c. It is not merely the pardon of sin, but the sanctification of the nature, and strength for daily obedience, that is promised in the covenant; and both must be received from the Mediator's hand, and ascribed to him as their proper source. It is an admirable expression of the apostle Paul, who says, "I obtained mercy to be faithful;" accounting that a subject of gratitude, and a mercy received, which others would have reckoned an occasion of boasting. Nothing is more contrary to the spirit of the gospel than self-dependence, and indeed the whole substance of this dispensation has been designed to abase the pride of man, and to exalt the grace of God.

To professing believers, the whole duties of the law of God are to be preached, for believers are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.

The laws of the gospel are to be inculcated as the fruits of faith, and the evidence of a saving change. There is a great difference between considering duties as going before, and as following faith and reconciliation; the first is legal, the last evangelical. You need not be afraid but that duties may be preached as strictly in the last way as in the first, and it will certainly be done with much greater safety.

L E T T E R S

ON

E D U C A T I O N .



L E T T E R S

ON

E D U C A T I O N.

LETTER I.

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

The consequence of my thinking so long upon it, before committing my thoughts to paper, will pro-

bably be the taking the thing in a greater compass than either of us at first intended, and writing a series of letters instead of one. With this view I begin with a preliminary to the successful education of children, viz. that husband and wife ought to be entirely one upon this subject, not only agreed as to the end, but as to the means to be used, and the plan to be followed in order to attain it. It ought to encourage you to proceed in your design, that I am persuaded you will not only meet with no opposition to a rational and serious education of your children, but great assistance from Mrs S——.

* * * * *

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

do any good, and certainly producing very much evil.

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

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

education. It will be the most powerful of all inducements to duty, and at the same time a restraint upon that natural fondness and indulgence which, by a sort of fascination or fatality, makes parents often do or permit what their judgment condemns, and then excuse themselves by saying, that no doubt it is wrong, but truly they cannot help it.

Another preliminary to the proper education of children is, a firm persuasion of the benefit of it, and the probable, at least, if not certain success of it, when faithfully and prudently conducted. This sets an edge upon the spirit, and enables the Christian not only to make some attempts, but to persevere with patience and diligence. I know not a common saying either more false or pernicious, than “that the children of good men are as bad as others.” This saying carries in it a supposition, that whereas the force of education is confessed with respect to every other human character and accomplishment, it is of no consequence at all as to religion. This, I think, is contrary to daily experience. Where do we expect to find young persons piously disposed but in pious families? The exceptions, or rather appearances to the contrary, are easily accounted for in more ways than one. Many persons appear to be religious, while they are not so in reality, but are chiefly governed by the applause of men. Hence their visible conduct may be specious, or their public performances applauded, and yet their families be neglected.

It must also be acknowledged, that some truly well-disposed persons are extremely defective or independent in this part of their duty, and therefore it

is no wonder that it should not succeed. This was plainly the case with Eli, whose sons, we are told, made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. However, I must observe, if we allow such to be truly good men, we must at the same time confess, that this was a great drawback upon their character; and that they differed very much from the father of the faithful, who had this honourable testimony given him by God, "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, that they serve me." To this we may add, that the child of a good man, who is seen to follow dissolute courses, draws the attention of mankind more upon him, and is much more talked of, than any other person of the same character. Upon the whole, it is certainly of moment, that one who desires to educate his children in the fear of God, should do it in a humble persuasion, that if he is not defective in his own duty, he will not be denied the blessing of success. I could tell you some remarkable instances of parents who seemed to labour in vain for a long time, and yet were so happy as to see a change at last; and of some children in whom, even after the death of the parents, the seed which was early sown, and seemed to have been entirely smothered, has at last produced fruit. And indeed no less seems to follow from the promise annexed to the command, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Having laid down these preliminaries, I shall say a few things upon the preservation of the health of

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

The fundamental rules for preserving the health of children, are cleanliness, liberty, and free air. By cleanliness I do not mean keeping the outside of their clothes in a proper condition to be seen before company, nor hindering them from fouling their hands and feet when they are capable of going abroad, but keeping them dry in the night-time, when young, and frequently washing their bodies with cold water, and other things of the same nature and tendency. The second rule is liberty: All persons, young and old, love liberty; and, as far as it does them no harm, it will certainly do them good. Many a free born subject is kept a slave for the first ten years of his life, and is so much handled, and carried about by women in his infancy, that the limbs and other parts of his body are frequently mishapen, and the whole very much weakened; besides, the spirits, when under confinement, are generally in a dull and languishing state. The best exercise in the world for children, is to let them romp and jump about as soon as they are able, according to their own fancy. This, in the

country, is best done in the fields; in a city, a well aired room is better than being sent into the streets under the care of a servant; very few of whom are able so far to curb their own inclinations, as to let the children follow theirs, even where they may do it with safety. As to free air, there is nothing more essentially necessary to the strength and growth of animals and plants. If a few plants of any kind are sown in a close confined place, they commonly grow up tall, small, and very weak. I have seen a bed of beans in a garden, under the shade of a hedge or tree, very long and slender, which brought to my mind a young family of quality, trained up in a delicate manner, who, if they grow at all, grow to length, but never to thickness. So universal is this, that I believe the body of a sturdy or well-built make, is reckoned among them a coarse and vulgar thing.

There is one thing, with regard to servants, that I would particularly recommend to your attention. All children are liable to accidents; these may happen unavoidably, but do generally arise from the carelessness of servants; and to this they are almost always attributed by parents. This disposes all servants, good or bad, to conceal them from the parents, when they can possibly do it. By this means children often receive hurts in falls or otherwise, which, if known in time, might be easily remedied, but not being known, either prove fatal, or make them lame or deformed. A near relation of mine has a high shoulder and a distorted waist, from this very cause. To prevent such accidents, it is necessary to take all pains possible to acquire the

confidence of servants, to convince them of the necessity of concealing nothing. There are two dispositions in parents, which hinder the servants from making discoveries; the first is, when they are very passionate, and apt to storm and rage against their servants, for every real or supposed neglect. Such persons can never expect a confession, which must be followed by such terrible vengeance. The other is, when they are tender-hearted or timorous to excess, which makes them shew themselves deeply affected, or greatly terrified, upon any little accident that befalls their children. In this case, the very best servants are unwilling to tell them through fear of making them miserable. In such cases, therefore, I would advise parents, whatever may be their real opinions, to discover them as little as possible to their servants. Let them still inculcate this maxim, that there should be no secrets concerning children kept from those most nearly interested in them. And that there may be no temptation to such conduct, let them always appear as cool and composed as possible when any discovery is made, and be ready to forgive a real fault, in return for a candid acknowledgment.



LETTER II.

IF I mistake not, my last letter was concluded by some remarks on the means of trying servants to be careful of the safety of children, and ready to discover, early and honestly, any accidents that might happen to befall them. I must make some

farther remarks upon servants. It is a subject of great importance, and inseparably connected with what I have undertaken. You will find it extremely difficult to educate children properly, if the servants of the family do not conspire in it; and impossible, if they are inclined to hinder it. In such a case, the orders issued, or the method laid down, will be neglected, where that is possible and safe; where neglect is unsafe, they will be unsuccessfully or improperly executed, and many times, in the hearing of the children, they will be either laughed at, or complained of and disapproved. The certain consequence of this is, that children will insensibly come to look upon the directions and cautions of their parents, as unnecessary or unreasonable restraints. It is a known and very common way for servants to insinuate themselves into the affections of children, by granting them such indulgencies as would be refused them by their parents, as well as concealing the faults which ought to be punished by parents, and they are often very successful in training them up to a most dangerous fidelity in keeping the secret.

Such is the evil to be feared, which ought to have been more largely described; let us now come to the remedy. The foundation, to be sure, is to be very nice and careful in the choice of servants. This is commonly thought to be an extremely difficult matter, and we read frequently in public papers, the heaviest complaints of bad servants. I am, however, one of those who think the fault is at least as often in the masters. Good servants may certainly be had, and do generally incline of them-

selves to be in good families, and when they find that they are so, do often continue very long in the same, without desiring to remove. You ought, therefore, to be exceedingly scrupulous, and not without an evident necessity to hire any servant but who seems to be sober and pious. Indeed I flatter myself, that a pious family is such as none but one who is either a saint or a hypocrite will be supposed to continue in. If any symptoms of the last character appear, you need not be told what you ought to do.

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

not exchange it for a bill or bond for a very considerable sum.

But the third and finishing direction with regard to servants, is to convince them, in a cool and dispassionate manner, of the reasonableness of your method of proceeding, that as it is dictated by conscience, it is conducted with prudence. Thence it is easy to represent to them that it is their duty, instead of hindering its success by opposition or negligence, to co-operate with it to the utmost of their power. It is not below any man to reason in some cases with his servants. There is a way of speaking to them on such subjects, by which you will lose nothing of your dignity, but even corroborate your authority. While you manifest your firm resolution never to depart from your right and title to command, you may, notwithstanding; at proper seasons, and by way of condescension, give such general reasons for your conduct, as to shew that you are not acting by mere caprice or humour. Nay, even while you sometimes insist that your command of itself shall be a law, and that you will not suffer it to be disputed, nor be obliged to give a reason for it, you may easily shew them that this also is reasonable. They may be told that you have the greatest interest in the welfare of your children, the best opportunity of being apprised as to the means of prosecuting it, and that there may be many reasons for your orders, which it is unnecessary or improper for them to know.

Do not think that all this is excessive refinement, chimerical or impossible. Servants are reasonable creatures, and are best governed by a mixture of

authority and reason. They are generally delighted to find themselves treated as reasonable, and will sometimes discover a pride in shewing that they understand, as well as find a pleasure in entering into your views. When they find, as they will every day by experience, the success and benefit of a proper method of education, it will give them a high opinion of, and confidence in your judgment; they will frequently consult you in their own affairs, as well as implicitly follow your directions in the management of yours. After all, the very highest instance of true greatness of mind, and the best support of your authority, when you see necessary to interpose it, is not to be opinionative or obstinate, but willing to acknowledge or remit a real mistake, if it is discreetly pointed out, even by those in the lowest stations. The application of these reflections will occur in several of the following branches of this subject.

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

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

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

The authority ought also to be absolute, that it may not be severe. The more complete and uniform a parent's authority is, the offences will be more rare, punishment will be less needed, and the more gentle kind of correction will be abundantly sufficient. We see every where about us examples of this. A parent that has once obtained, and

knows how to preserve authority, will do more by a look of displeasure, than another by the most passionate words, and even blows. It holds universally in families and schools, and even the greater bodies of men, the army and navy, that those who keep the strictest discipline give the fewest strokes. I have frequently remarked that parents, even of the softest tempers, and who are famed for the greatest indulgence to their children, do, notwithstanding, correct them more frequently, and even more severely, though to very little purpose, than those who keep up their authority. The reason is plain. Children, by foolish indulgence, become often so forward and petulant in their tempers, that they provoke their easy parents past all endurance, so that they are obliged, if not to strike, at least to scold them, in a manner as little to their own credit as their childrens profit.

There is not a more disgusting sight, than the impotent rage of a parent who has no authority. Among the lower ranks of people, who are under no restraint from decency, you may sometimes see a father or mother running out into the street after a child who is fled from them, with looks of fury and words of execration, and they are often stupid enough to imagine, that neighbours or passengers will approve them in this conduct, though in fact it fills every beholder with horror. There is a degree of the same fault to be seen in persons of better rank, though expressing itself somewhat differently. Ill words and altercations will often fall out between parents and children before company; a sure sign that there is defect of government at home or in

private. The parent, stung with shame at the misbehaviour or indiscretion of the child, desires to persuade the observers that it is not his fault, and thereby effectually convinces every person of reflection that it *is*.

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

Habits, in general, may be very early formed in children. An association of ideas is, as it were, the parent of habit. If, then, you can accustom your children to perceive, that your will must always prevail over theirs, when they are opposed, the thing is done, and they will submit to it without difficulty or regret. To bring this about, as soon as they begin to shew their inclination by desire or aversion, let single instances be chosen now and then (not too frequently) to contradict them. For ex-

ample, if a child shews a desire to have any thing in his hand that he sees, or has any thing in his hand with which he is delighted, let the parent take it from him, and when he does so, let no consideration whatever make him restore it at that time. Then at a considerable interval, perhaps a whole day is little enough, especially at first, let the same thing be repeated. In the mean time, it must be carefully observed, that no attempt should be made to contradict the child in the intervals. Not the least appearance of opposition, if possible, should be found between the will of the parent and that of the child, except in those chosen cases when the parent must always prevail.

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

This experiment, frequently repeated, will in a little time so perfectly habituate the child to yield to the parent whenever he interposes, that he will

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

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

THE theory laid down in my last letter for establishing an early and absolute authority over children, is of much greater moment than perhaps you will immediately apprehend. There is a great diversity in the temper and disposition of children, and no less in the penetration, prudence, and resolution of parents. From all these circumstances difficulties arise, which increase very fast as the work is delayed. Some children have naturally very stiff and obstinate tempers, and some have a certain pride, or if you please, greatness of mind, which makes them think it a mean thing to yield. This disposition is often greatly strengthened in those of high birth, by the ideas of their own dignity and

importance, instilled into them from their mother's milk. I have known a boy not six years of age, who made it a point of honour not to cry when he was beat, even by his parents. Other children have so strong passions, or so great sensibility, that if they receive correction they will cry immoderately, and either be, or seem to be, affected to such a degree, as to endanger their health or life. Neither is it uncommon for the parents in such a case to give up the point, and if they do not ask pardon, at least they give very genuine marks of repentance and sorrow for what they have done.

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

brought on so early, that even memory itself shall not be able to reach back to its beginning. Unless this is done, there are many cases in which, after the best management, the authority will be imperfect; and some in which any thing that deserves that name will be impossible. There are some families, not contemptible either in station or character, in which the parents are literally and properly obedient to their children, are forced to do things against their will, and chidden if they discover the least backwardness to comply. If you know none such, I am sure I do.

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

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

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

That this may not be carried too far, I would

recommend every expression of affection and kindness to children when it is safe; that is to say, when their behaviour is such as to deserve it. There is no opposition at all between parental tenderness and parental authority. They are the best supports to each other. It is not only lawful, but will be of service, that parents should discover the greatest fondness for children in infancy, and make them perceive distinctly with how much pleasure they gratify all their innocent inclinations. This, however, must always be done when they are quiet, gentle, and submissive in their carriage. Some have found fault with giving them, for doing well, little rewards of sweet-meats and play-things, as tending to make them mercenary, and leading them to look upon the indulgence of appetite as the chief good. This, I apprehend, is rather refining too much; the great point is, that they be rewarded for doing good, and not for doing evil. When they are cross and froward, I would never buy peace, but force it. Nothing can be more weak and foolish, or more destructive of authority, than when children are noisy and in an ill-humour, to give them or promise them something to appease them. When the Roman emperors began to give pensions and subsidies to the northern nations to keep them quiet, a man might have foreseen, without the spirit of prophecy, who would be master in a little time. The case is exactly the same with children. They will soon avail themselves of this easiness in their parents, command favours instead of begging them, and be insolent when they should be grateful.

The same conduct ought to be uniformly prefer-

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

It is a noble support of authority, when it is really and visibly directed to the most important end. My meaning in this, I hope, is not obscure. The end I consider as most important is, the glory of God in the eternal happiness and salvation of children. Whoever believes in a future state, whoever has a just sense of the importance of eternity to himself, cannot fail to have a like concern for his offspring. This should be his end, both in instruction and government; and when it visibly appears that he is under the constraint of conscience, and that either reproof or correction are the fruit of sanctified love, it will give them irresistible force. I will tell you here, with all the simplicity necessary in such a situation, what I have often said in my

course of pastoral visitation in families, where there is in many cases, through want of judgment as well as want of principle, a great neglect of authority : “ Use your authority for God, and he will support it. Let it always be seen that you are more displeased at sin than at folly. What a shame is it, that if a child shall, through the inattention and levity of youth, break a dish, or a pane of the window, by which you may lose the value of a few pence, you should storm and rage at him with the utmost fury, or perhaps beat him with unmerciful severity ; but if he tells a lie, or takes the name of God in vain, or quarrels with his neighbours, he shall easily obtain pardon ; or perhaps, if he is re-proved by others, you will justify him, and take his part.”

You cannot easily believe the weight that it gives to family authority, when it appears visibly to proceed from a sense of duty, and to be itself an act of obedience to God. This will produce coolness and composure in the manner ; it will direct and enable a parent to mix every expression of heart felt tenderness, with the most severe and needful reproofs. It will make it quite consistent to affirm, that the rod itself is an evidence of love, and that it is true of every pious parent on earth, what is said of our Father in heaven, “ Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not ? But if ye are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then ye are bastards and not sons.” With this maxim in your

eye, I would recommend, that solemnity take the place of, and be substituted for severity. When a child, for example, discovers a very depraved disposition, instead of multiplying stripes in proportion to the reiterated provocations, every circumstance should be introduced, whether in reproof or punishment, that can either discover the seriousness of your mind, or make an impression of awe and reverence upon his. The time may be fixed beforehand—at some distance—the Lord's day—his own birth-day—with many other circumstances that may be so special that it is impossible to enumerate them. I shall just repeat what you have heard often from me in conversation, that several pious persons made it an invariable custom, as soon as their children could read, never to correct them but after they had read over all the passages of Scripture which command it, and generally accompanied it with prayer to God for his blessing. I know well with what ridicule this would be treated by many, if publicly mentioned; but that does not shake my judgment in the least, being fully convinced it is a most excellent method, and that it is impossible to blot from the minds of children, while they live upon earth, the impressions that are made by these means, or to abate the veneration they will retain for the parents who acted such a part.

Suffer me here to observe to you, that such a plan as the above requires judgment, reflection, and great attention in your whole conduct. Take heed that there be nothing admitted in the intervals that counteract it. Nothing is more destructive of authority than frequent disputes and chiding upon small mat-

ters. This is often more irksome to children than parents are aware of. It weakens their influence insensibly, and in time makes their opinion and judgment of little weight, if not wholly contemptible. As before I recommended dignity in your general conduct, so, in a particular manner, let the utmost care be taken not to render authority cheap, by too often interposing it. There is really too great a risk to be run in every such instance. If parents will be deciding directly, and censuring every moment, it is to be supposed they will be sometimes wrong, and when this evidently appears, it will take away from the credit of their opinion, and weaken their influence, even where it ought to prevail.

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

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

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

Neither is it my purpose to put you in mind of the importance of example to enforce instruction, or of the shamefulnes of a man's pretending to teach others who he despises himself. This ought in the strongest manner to be laid before pastors and other public performers who often defeat habitually by their lives, what they attempt to do occasionally in the execution of their office. If there remain the least suspicion of your being of that character, these letters would have been written in another strain. I believe there are some persons of very irregular lives, who

have so much natural light in their consciences, that they would be grieved, or perhaps offended, if their children should tread exactly in their own steps; but even these, and much less others who are more hardened, can never be expected to undertake or carry on the system of education we are now endeavouring to illustrate. Suffer me, however, before I proceed, to make one remark—when I have heard of parents who have been watched by their own children when drunk, and taken care of, lest they should meet with injury or hurtful accidents; or whose intemperate rage and horrid blasphemies have without scruple been exposed, both to children and servants; or who, as has sometimes been the case, were scarcely at the pains to conceal their criminal amours, even from their own offspring—I have often reflected on the degree of impiety of principle, or fearedness of conscience, or both united, necessary to support them in such circumstances. Let us leave all such with a mixture of pity and disdain.

By mentioning example, therefore, as an important and necessary branch of the education of children, I have chiefly in view a great number of particulars, which, separately taken, are, or at least are supposed to be of little moment, yet by their union or frequent repetition produce important and lasting effects. I have also in view to include all that class of actions in which there is, or may be, a coincidence between the duties of piety and politeness, and by means of which the one is incorporated with the other. These are to be introduced under the head of example, because they will appear there to best

advantage, and because many of them can hardly be taught or understood in any other way.

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

You know, Sir, as much as any man, how contrary my opinion and conduct have been upon this subject. I cannot help thinking, that true religion is not only consistent with, but necessary to the perfection of true politeness. There is a noble sentiment to this purpose illustrated at considerable length in the Port-Royal Essays, viz. "That worldly politeness is no more than an imitation or imperfect copy of Christian charity, being the pretence or outward appearance of that deference to the judgment, and attention to the interest of others, which a true Christian has as the rule of his life, and the disposi-

tion of his heart *." I have at present in my mind the idea of certain persons, whom you will easily guess at, of the first quality, one or two of the male, and twice that number at least of the female sex, in whom piety and high station are united. What a sweetness and complacency of countenance, what a condescension and gentleness of manners, arising from the humility of the gospel being joined to the refined elegance inseparable from their circumstances in life !

Be pleased to follow me to the other extreme of human society. Let us go to the remotest cottage of the wildest country, and visit the family that inhabits it. If they are pious, there is a certain humanity and good-will attending their simplicity, which makes it highly agreeable. There is also a decency in their sentiments, which, flowing from the dictates of conscience, is as pleasing, in all respects, as the restraint imposed by the rules of good breeding, with which the persons here in view have little opportunity of being acquainted. On the contrary, unbred country people, when without principle, have generally a savageness and brutality in their carriage, as contrary to good manners as to piety

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

itself. No one has a better opportunity of making observations of this kind than I have, from my office and situation, and I can assure you, that religion is the great polisher of the common people. It even enlarges their understanding as to other things. Having been accustomed to exercise their judgment and reflection on religious subjects, they are capable of talking more sensibly on agriculture, politics, or any common topic of indifferent conversation.

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

I have been already too long in the introduction, and in giving the reasons for what I propose shall make a part of this branch of the subject, and yet I must make another preliminary remark: There is the greater necessity for uniting piety and politeness in the system of family example, that as piety is by that means inculcated with the greatest advantage, so politeness can scarcely be attained in any other way. It is very rare that persons reach a higher degree of politeness than what they have been formed to in the families of their parents and other near relations. True politeness does not consist in dress, or a few motions of the body, but in a habit of sentiment and conversation; the first may be learned from a master, and in a little time—the last only by a long and constant intercourse with those who possess, and are therefore able to impart it. As the difficulty is certainly greatest with the female sex, because they have fewer opportunities of being abroad in the world, I shall take an example from among them.

Suppose a man of low birth, living in the country, by industry and parsimony has become wealthy, and has a daughter to whom he desires to give a genteel education; he sends her to your city to a boarding school, for the other which is nearer me you are pleased not to think sufficient for that purpose. She will speedily learn to buy expensive and fashionable clothes, and most probably be in the very height and extravagance of the fashion; one of the surest signs of a vulgar taste. She may also, if her capacity is tolerable, get rid of her rustic air and carriage; and if it be better than ordinary, learn

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

Though the length of this digression, or explana-

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

not this naturally lead the young mind to consider riches and high station as the great sources of earthly happiness? Will it not give a strong bias to their whole desires and studies, as well as visibly affect their behaviour to others in social life? Do not think that this is too nice and refined: the first impressions upon young persons, though inconsiderable in themselves, have often a great as well as lasting effect.

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

But what I must particularly recommend to you, is to avoid that common but detestable custom of receiving persons with courtesy, and all the marks of real friendship in your house, and the moment they are gone, falling upon their character and con-

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

In every station, and among all ranks, this rule is often transgressed; but there is one point in which it is more frequently and more universally transgressed than in any other, and that is by turning the absent into ridicule, for any thing odd or awkward in their behaviour. I am sorry to say that this is an indecorum that prevails in several families of high rank. A man of inferior station, for some particular reason, is admitted to their company. He is perhaps not well acquainted with the rules of politeness, and the presence of his superiors, to which he is unaccustomed, increases his embarrassment. Immediately on his departure, a petulant boy or giddy girl will set about mimicking his mo-

tions, and repeating his phrases, to the great entertainment of the company, who apparently derive much self-satisfaction from a circumstance in which there is no merit at all. If any person renders himself justly ridiculous, by affecting a character which he is unable to sustain, let him be treated with the contempt he deserves. But there is something very ungenerous in people treating their inferiors with disdain, merely because the same Providence that made their ancestors great, left the others in a low sphere.

It has often given me great indignation to see a gentleman or his wife, of real worth, good understanding, but simple manners, despised and ridiculed for a defect which they could not remedy, and that often by persons the most insignificant and frivolous, who never uttered a sentence in their lives that deserved to be remembered or repeated. But if this conduct is ungenerous in the great, how diverting is it to see the same disposition carried down through all the inferior ranks, and shewing itself in a silly triumph of every class over those who are supposed to be below them? I have known many persons, whose station was not superior to mine, take great pleasure in expressing their contempt of *vulgar ideas* and *low life*; and even a tradesman's wife in a city, glorying over the unpolished manners of her country acquaintance.

Upon the whole, as there is no disposition to which young persons are more prone than derision, or, as the author I cited above, M. Fenelon, expresses it, *un esprit moqueur et malin*, and few that parents are more apt to cherish, under the idea of

its being a sign of sprightliness and vivacity, there is none which a pious and prudent parent should take greater care to restrain by admonition, and destroy by a contrary example.

LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

LET us now proceed to consider more fully what it is to form children to piety by example. This is a subject of great extent, and perhaps of difficulty. The difficulty, however, does not consist either in the abstruseness of the arguments, or uncertainty of the facts upon which they are founded, but in the minuteness or trifling nature of the circumstances, taken separately, which makes them often either wholly unnoticed, or greatly undervalued. It is a subject which, if I mistake not, is much more easily conceived than explained. If you have it constantly in your mind, that your whole visible deportment will powerfully, though insensibly, influence the opinions and future conduct of your children, it will give a form or colour, if I may speak so, to every thing you say or do. There are numberless and nameless instances in which this reflection will make you speak, or refrain from speaking; act, or abstain from some circumstances of action in what you are engaged in; nor will this be accompanied with any reluctance in the one case, or constraint in the other.

But I must not content myself with this. My

profession gives me many opportunities of observing, that the impression made by general truths, however justly stated or fully proved, is seldom strong or lasting. Let me, therefore, descend to practice, and illustrate what I have said by examples. Here again a difficulty occurs. If I give a particular instance, it will perhaps operate no farther than recommending a like conduct in circumstances the same, or perhaps perfectly similar. For example, I might say, in speaking to the disadvantage of absent persons, I beseech you never fail to add the reason why you take such liberty; and indeed never take that liberty at all, but when it can be justified upon the principles of prudence, candour, and charity. A thing may be right in itself, but children should be made to see why it is right. This is one instance of exemplary caution; but if I were to add a dozen more to it, they would only be detached precepts, whereas I am anxious to take in the whole extent of edifying example. In order to this, let me range or divide what I have to say under distinct heads. A parent who wishes that his example should be a speaking lesson to his children, should order it so as to convince them, that he considers religion as necessary, respectable, amiable, profitable, and delightful. I am sensible that some of these characters may seem so nearly allied, as scarcely to admit of a distinction. Many parts of a virtuous conduct fall under more than one of these denominations. Some actions, perhaps, deserve all the epithets here mentioned, without exception and without prejudice one of another. But the distinctions seem to me very useful; for there is certainly

a class of actions which may be said to belong peculiarly, or at least eminently, to each of these different heads. By taking them separately, therefore, it will serve to point out more fully the extent of your duty, and to suggest it when it would not otherwise occur, as well as to set the obligation to it in the stronger light.

1. You should, in your general deportment, make your children perceive that you look upon religion as absolutely necessary. I place this first, because it appears to me first both in point of order and force. I am far from being against taking all pains to shew that religion is rational and honourable in itself, and vice the contrary; but I despise the foolish refinement of those who, through fear of making children mercenary, are for being very sparing of the mention of heaven or hell. Such conduct is apt to make them conceive, that a neglect of their duty is only falling short of a degree of honour and advantage, which, for the gratification of their passions, they are very willing to relinquish. Many parents are much more ready to tell their children such or such a thing is mean, and not like a gentleman, than to warn them that they will thereby incur the displeasure of their Maker. But when the practices are really and deeply criminal, as in swearing and lying, it is quite improper to rest the matter there. I admit that they are both mean, and that justice ought to be done to them in this respect, but I contend that it should only be a secondary consideration.

Let not human reasonings be put in the balance with divine wisdom. The care of our souls is re-

presented in Scripture as the one thing needful. He makes a miserable bargain, who gains the whole world and loses his own soul. It is not the native beauty of virtue, or the outward credit of it, or the inward satisfaction arising from it, or even all these combined together, that will be sufficient to change our natures and govern our conduct, but a deep conviction, that unless we are reconciled to God, we shall without doubt perish everlastingly.

You will say this is very true, and very fit for a pulpit, but what is that class of actions that should impress it habitually on the minds of children? Perhaps you will even say, what one action will any good man be guilty of, much more habitual conduct, that can tend to weaken their belief of it? This is the very point which I mean to explain. It is certainly possible that a man may at stated times give out, that he looks upon religion to be absolutely necessary, and yet his conduct, in many particulars, may have no tendency to impress this on the minds of his children. If he suffers particular religious duties to be easily displaced, to be shortened, postponed, or omitted, upon the most trifling accounts, depend upon it, this will make religion in general seem less necessary to those who observe it. If an unpleasant day will keep a man from public worship, when perhaps a hurricane will not keep him from an election meeting; if he chuses to take physic, or give it to his children on the Lord's day, when it could be done with equal ease on the day before or after; if he will more readily allow his servants to pay a visit to their friends on that day than any other, though he has reason to believe

they will spend it in junketing and idleness—it will not be easy to avoid suspecting, that worldly advantage is what determines his choice.

Take an example or two more on this head. Supposing a man usually to worship God in his family, if he sometimes omits it, if he allow every little business to interfere with it, if company will make him dispense with it, or shift it from its proper season, believe me, the idea of religion being every man's first and great concern, is in a good measure weakened, if not wholly lost. It is a very nice thing in religion to know the real connexion between, and the proper mixture of spirit and form. The form without the spirit is good for nothing; but, on the other hand, the spirit without the form never yet existed. I am of opinion, that punctual, and even scrupulous regularity, in all those duties that occur periodically, is the way to make them easy and pleasant to those who attend them. They also become, like all other habits, in some degree necessary; so that those who have been long accustomed to them, feel an uneasiness in families where they are generally or frequently neglected. I cannot help also mentioning to you, the great danger of paying and receiving visits on the Lord's day, unless when it is absolutely necessary. It is a matter not merely difficult, but wholly impracticable in such cases, to guard effectually against improper subjects of conversation. Nor is this all; for let the conversation be what it will, I contend that the duties of the family and the closet are fully sufficient to employ the whole time; which must therefore

be wasted or misapplied by the intercourse of strangers.

I only further observe, that I know no circumstance from which your opinion of the necessity of religion will appear with the greater clearness, or carry in it greater force, than your behaviour towards, and treatment of your children in time of dangerous sickness. Certainly there is no time in their whole lives when the necessity appears more urgent, or the opportunity more favourable, for impressing their minds with a sense of the things that belong to their peace. What shall we say then of those parents who, through fear of alarming their minds, and augmenting their disorder, will not suffer any mention to be made to them of the approach of death, or the importance of eternity? I will relate to you an example of this. A young gentleman of estate in my parish was taken ill of a dangerous fever in a friend's house at a distance. I went to see him in his illness, and his mother, a widow lady, intreated me not to say any thing alarming to him, and not to pray with him, but to go to prayer in another room, wherein she wisely observed, it would have the same effect. The young man himself soon found that I did not act as he had expected, and was so impatient that it became necessary to give him the true reason. On this he insisted in the most positive manner, that all restriction should be taken off, which was done. What was the consequence? He was exceedingly pleased and composed; and if this circumstance did not hasten, it certainly neither hindered nor retarded his recovery.

Be pleased to remark, that the young gentleman here spoken of, neither was at that time, nor is yet, so far as I am able to judge, truly religious; and therefore I have formed a fixed opinion, that in this, as in many other instances, the wisdom of man disappoints itself. Pious advice and consolation, if but tolerably administered in sickness, are not only useful to the soul, but serve particularly to calm an agitated mind, to bring the animal spirits to an easy flow, and the whole frame into such a state as will best favour the operation of medicine, or the efforts of the constitution, to throw off or conquer the disease.

Suffer me to wander a little from my subject, by observing to you, that as I do not think the great are to be much envied for any thing, so they are truly and heartily to be pitied for the deception that is usually put upon them by flattery and false tenderness. Many of them are brought up with so much delicacy, that they are never suffered to see any miserable or afflicting object, nor, so far as can be hindered, to hear any affecting story of distress. If they themselves are sick, how many absurd and palpable lies are told them by their friends? and as for physicians, I may safely say few of them are much conscience-bound in this matter. Now, let the success of these measures be what it will, the only fruit to be reaped from them is, to make a poor dying sinner mistake his or her condition, and vainly dream of earthly happiness while hastening to the pit of perdition. But, as I said before, men are often taken in their own craftiness. It oftentimes happens that such persons, by an ignorant

servant, or officious neighbour, or some unlucky accident, make a sudden discovery of their true situation, and the shock frequently proves fatal. O how much more desirable is it, how much more like the reason of men, as well as the faith of Christians, to consider and prepare for what must inevitably come to pass! I cannot easily conceive any thing more truly noble, than for a person in health and vigour, in honour and opulence, by voluntary reflection to sympathize with others in distress, and by a well-founded confidence in divine mercy, to obtain the victory over the fear of death.

2. You ought to live so as to make religion appear respectable. Religion is a venerable thing in itself, and it spreads an air of dignity over a person's whole deportment. I have seen a common tradesman, merely because he was a man of true piety and undeniable worth, treated by his children, apprentices, and servants, with a much greater degree of deference and submission than is commonly given to men of superior station without that character. Many of the same meannesses are avoided, by a gentleman from a principle of honour, and by a good man from a principle of conscience. The first keeps out of the company of common people, because they are below him; the last is cautious of mixing with them, because of that levity and profaneness that is to be expected from them. If, then, religion is really venerable when sincere, a respectable conduct ought to be maintained, as a proof of your own integrity, as well as to recommend it to your children. To this add, if you please, that as reverence is the peculiar duty of children to their

parents, any thing that tends to lessen it is more deeply felt by them than by others who observe it. When I have seen a parent, in the presence of his child, meanly wrangling with his servant, telling extravagant stories, or otherwise exposing his vanity, credulity, or folly, I have felt just the same proportion of sympathy and tenderness for the one, that I did of contempt or indignation at the other.

What has been said will in part explain the errors which a parent ought to shun, and what circumstances he ought to attend to, that religion may appear respectable. All meannesses, whether of sentiment, conversation, dress, manners, or employment, are carefully to be avoided. You will apply this properly to yourself. I may, however, just mention, that there is a considerable difference in all these particulars, according to mens' different stations. The same actions are mean in one station that are not so in another. The thing itself, however, still remains: as there is an order and cleanliness at the table of tradesmen, that is different from the elegance of a gentleman's, or the sumptuousness of a prince's or nobleman's. But to make the matter still plainer by particular examples:—I look upon talkativeness and vanity to be among the greatest enemies to dignity. It is needless to say how much vanity is contrary to true religion; and as to the other, which may seem rather an infirmity than a sin, we are expressly cautioned against it, and commanded to be swift to hear and slow to speak. Sudden anger, too, and loud clamorous scolding, are at once contrary to piety and dignity. Parents should therefore acquire, as much as possi-

ble, a compofure of fpirit and meeknefs of language; nor are there many circumftances that will more recommend religion to children, when they fee that this felf-command is the effect of principle and a fenfe of duty.

There is a weaknefs I have obferved in many parents, to fhew a partial fondnefs for fome of their children, to the neglect, and in many cafes approaching to a jealoufy or hatred of others. Sometimes we fee a mother difcover an exceffive partiality to a handsome daughter, in comparifon of thofe that are more homely in their figure. This is a barbarity which would be truly incredible, did not experience prove that it really exifts. One would think they fhould rather be excited by natural affection, to give all poffible encouragement to thofe who labour under a difadvantage, and beftow every attainable accomplifhment to balance the defects of outward form. At other times we fee a partiality which cannot be accounted for at all, where the moft ugly, peevifh, froward child of the whole family, is the favourite of both parents. Reason ought to counteract thefe errors, but piety ought to extirpate them entirely. I do not ftay to mention the bad effects that flow from them, my purpofe being only to fhew the excellence of that character which is exempted from them.

The real dignity of religion will alfo appear in the conduct of a good man towards his fervants. It will point out the true and proper diftinction between condefcenfion and meannefs. Humility is the very fpirit of the gofpel; therefore hear your fervants with patience, examine their conduct with

candour, treat them with all the humanity and gentleness that is consistent with unremitted authority ; when they are sick, visit them in person, provide remedies for them, sympathize with them, and shew them that you do so ; take care of their interests ; assist them with your counsel and influence to obtain what is their right. But, on the other hand, never make yourself their proper companion ; do not seem to taste their society ; do not hear their jokes, or ask their news, or tell them yours. Believe me, this will never make you either beloved or esteemed by your servants themselves ; and it will greatly derogate from the dignity of true religion in the eyes of your children. Suffer me also to caution you against that most unjust and illiberal practice, of exercising your wit in humorous strokes upon your servants, before company, or while they wait at table. I do not know any thing so evidently mean, that is at the same time so common. It is, I think, just such a cowardly thing as to beat a man who is bound ; because the servant, however happy a repartee might occur to him, is not at liberty to answer, but at the risk of having his bones broken. In this, as in many other particulars, reason, refinement, and liberal manners, teach exactly the same thing with religion ; and I am happy in being able to add, that religion is generally the most powerful, as well as the most uniform principle of decent conduct.

I shall have done with this particular when I have observed, that those who are engaged in public, or what I may call political life, have an excellent opportunity of making religion appear truly respectable. What I mean is, by shewing them-

selves firm and incorruptible in supporting those measures that appear best calculated for promoting the interest of religion and the good of mankind. In all these cases I admire that man who has principles, whose principles are known, and whom every body despairs of being able to seduce, or bring over to the opposite interest. I do not commend furious and intemperate zeal. Steadiness is a much better, and quite a different thing. I would contend with any man who should speak most calmly, but I would also contend with him who should act most firmly. As for your placebo's, your prudent, courtly, compliant gentlemen, whose vote in Assembly will tell you where they dined the day before, I hold them very cheap indeed, as you very well know. I do not enter further into this argument, but conclude at this time by observing, that public measures are always embraced under pretence of principle, and therefore an uniform uncorrupted public character is one of the best evidences of real principle. The free-thinking gentry tell us upon this subject, that "every man has his price." It lies out of my way to attempt refuting them at present, but it is to be hoped there are many whose price is far above their reach. If some of my near relations, who took so much pains to attach me to the interest of evangelical truth, had been governed by court influence in their political conduct, it had not been in my power to have esteemed their character, or perhaps to have adhered to their instructions. But as things now stand, I have done both from the beginning, and I hope God will enable me, by his grace, to continue to do so to the end of life.

L E T T E R S

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M A R R I A G E.

VOL. VII.

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LETTERS

ON

MARRIAGE.

LETTER I.

I OFFER, with some hesitation, a few reflections upon the married state. I express myself thus, because the subject has been so often and so fully treated, and by writers of the first class, that it may be thought nothing now remains to be said that can merit attention. My only apology is, that what I offer is the fruit of real observation and personal reflection. It is not a copy of any man's writings, but of my own thoughts; and therefore, if the sentiments should not be in themselves wholly new, they may possibly appear in a light not altogether common. I shall give you them in the way of aphorisms or observations; and subjoin to each, a few thoughts by way of proof or illustration.

1. Nothing can be more contrary to reason or public utility, than the conversation and writings of those who turn matrimony into ridicule; yet it is, in many cases, as weakly defended as it is unjustly attacked.

Those who treat marriage with ridicule, act in direct and deliberate opposition to the order of Providence, and to the constitution of the society of which they are members. The true reason why they are borne with so patiently is, that the Author of our nature has implanted in us instinctive propensities, which are by much too strong for their feeble attacks. But if we are to estimate the malignity of a man's conduct or sentiments, not from their effect, but from their native tendency, and his inward disposition, it is not easy to imagine any thing more criminal than an attempt to bring marriage into disesteem. It is plainly an effort, not only to destroy the happiness, but to prevent the existence of human nature. A man who continues through life in a single state, ought in justice to endeavour to satisfy the Public that his case is singular, and that he has some insuperable obstacle to plead in his excuse. If, instead of this, he reasons in defence of his own conduct, and takes upon him to condemn that of others, it is at once incredible and absurd; that is to say, he can scarcely be believed to be sincere; and whether he be sincere or not, he deserves to be detested.

In support of the last part of my remark, let it be observed, that those who write in defence of marriage, usually give such sublime and exalted descriptions, as are not realized in one case of a

thousand, and therefore cannot be a just motive to a considerate man. Instead of insisting on the absolute necessity of marriage for the service of the state, and the solid advantages that arise from it in ordinary cases, they give us a certain refined idea of felicity, which hardly exists any where but in the writer's imagination. Even the Spectator, than whom there is hardly in our language a more just and rational writer, after saying many excellent things in defence of marriage, scarcely ever fails to draw the character of a lady in such terms, that I may safely say, not above one that answers the description is to be found in a parish, or perhaps a country. Now, is it not much better to leave the matter to the force of nature, than to urge it by such arguments as these? Is the manner of thinking induced by such writings, likely to hasten or postpone a man's entering into the marriage state?

There is also a fault I think to be found in almost every writer who speaks in favour of the female sex, that they overrate the charms of the outward form. This is the case in all romances, a class of writings to which the world is very little indebted. The same thing may be said of plays, where the heroine for certain, and often all the ladies that are introduced, are represented as inimitably beautiful. Even Mr Addison himself, in his admirable description of Martia which he puts in the mouth of Juba, though it begins with,

'Tis not a set of features or complexion, &c.
yet could not help inserting,

True she is fair ; O, how divinely fair !

Now, I apprehend this is directly contrary to what should be the design of every moral writer. Men are naturally too apt to be carried away with the admiration of a beautiful face. Must it not, therefore, confirm them in this error, when beauty is made an essential part of every amiable character? The preference such writers pretend to give to the mental qualities, goes but a little way to remedy the evil. If they are never separated in the description, wherever men find the one they will pre-ferre upon the other. But is this according to truth, or agreeable to experience? What vast numbers of the most valuable women are to be found, who are by no means "divinely fair!" Are these all to be neglected then? Or is it not certain, from experience, that there is not a single quality on which matrimonial happiness depends so little as outward form? Every other quality that is good will go a certain length to atone for what is bad; as, for example, if a woman is active and industrious in her family, it will make a husband bear with more patience a little anxiety of countenance, or fretfulness of temper, though in themselves disagreeable. But (always supposing the honey-moon to be over) I do not think that beauty atones in the least degree for any bad quality whatsoever; it is, on the contrary, an aggravation of them, being considered as a breach of faith, or deception, by holding out a false signal.

2. In the married state in general, there is not so much happiness as young lovers dream of; nor is there by far so much unhappiness as loose authors universally suppose.

The first part of this aphorism will probably be easily admitted. Before mentioning, however, the little I mean to say upon it, I beg leave to observe, that it would be quite wrong to blame the tenderness and fervency of affection by which the sexes are drawn to one another, and that generous devotedness of heart which is often to be seen on one, and sometimes on both sides. This is nature itself, and when under the restraint of reason, and government of prudence, may be greatly subservient to the future happiness of life. But there is certainly an extravagance of sentiment and language on this subject, that is at once ridiculous in itself, and the proper cause, in due time, of wretchedness and disappointment.

Let any man, who has outlived these sensations himself, and has leisure to be amused, dip a little into the love songs that have been composed and published, from Anacreon to the present day, and what a fund of entertainment will he find provided for him! The heathen gods and goddesses are the standing and lawful means of celebrating the praises of a mistress, before whom, no doubt, Venus for beauty, and Minerva for wisdom, must go for nothing. Every image in nature has been called up to heighten our idea of female charms—the paleness of the lily, the freshness of the rose, the blush of the violet, and the vermilion of the peach. This is even still nothing. One of the most approved topics of a love-sick writer is, that all nature fades and mourns at the absence of his fair, and puts on a new bloom at her approach. All this, we know well, has place only in his imagination; for nature

proceeds quietly in her course, without minding him and his charmer in the least. But we are not yet done. The glory of the heavenly orbs, the lustre of the sun himself, and even the joys of heaven, are frequently and familiarly introduced, to express a lover's happiness or hopes. Flames, darts, arrows, and lightning from a female eye, have been expressions as old at least as the art of writing, and are still in full vogue. Some of these we can find no other fault with, than that they are a little *outré*, as the French express it; but I confess I have sometimes been surpris'd at the choice of lightning, because it is capable of a double application, and may put us in mind that some wives have lightning in their eyes sufficient to terrify a husband, as well as the maids have to consume a lover.

Does not all this plainly shew, that young persons are apt to indulge themselves with romantic expectations of a delight, both ecstatic and permanent, such as never did, and never can exist? And does it not at the same time expose matrimony to the scoffs of libertines, who, knowing that these raptures must soon come to an end, think it sufficient to disparage the state itself, that some inconsiderate persons have not met with in it what it was never intended to bestow?

I proceed therefore to observe, that there is not by far so much unhappiness in the married state in general, as loose authors universally suppose. I chuse to state the argument in this manner, because it is much more satisfying than drawing pictures of the extremes on either hand. It signifies very little, on the one hand, to describe the state of a few per-

sons distinguished for understanding, successful in life, respected by the Public, and dear to one another; or, on the other, those hateful brawls which by and bye produce an advertisement in the newspapers, "Whereas Sarah, the wife of the subscriber, has eloped from his bed and board," &c. If we would treat of this matter with propriety, we must consider how it stands among the bulk of mankind. The proposition, then, I mean to establish is, that there is much less unhappiness in the matrimonial state than is often apprehended, and indeed as much real comfort as there is any ground to expect.

To support this truth I observe, that taking mankind throughout, we find much more satisfaction and cheerfulness in the married than in the single. In proportion to their numbers, I think of those that are grown up to maturer years, or past the meridian of life, there is a much greater degree of peevishness and discontent, whimsicalness and peculiarity, in the last than in the first. The prospect of continuing single to the end of life, narrows the mind, and closes the heart. I knew an instance of a gentleman of good estate, who lived single till he was past forty, and he was esteemed by all his neighbours, not only frugal but mean in some parts of his conduct. This same person afterwards marrying, and having children, every body observed that he became liberal and open-hearted on the change, when one would have thought he had a stronger motive than before to save and hoard up. On this a neighbour of his made a remark, as a philosopher, that every ultimate passion is stronger

than an intermediate one ; that a single person loves wealth immediately, and on its own account ; whereas a parent can scarcely help preferring his children before it, and valuing it only for their sakes.

This leads me to observe, that marriage must be the source of happiness, as being the immediate cause of many other relations the most interesting and delightful. I cannot easily figure to myself any man who does not look upon it as the first of earthly blessings to have children, to be the objects of attachment and care when they are young, and to inherit his name and substance when he himself must, in the course of nature, go off the stage. Does not this very circumstance give unspeakable dignity to each parent in the other's eye, and serve to increase and confirm that union, which youthful passion and less durable motives first occasioned to take place ? I rather chuse to mention this argument, because neither exalted understandings, nor elegance of manners, are necessary to give it force. It is felt by the peasant as well as by the prince ; and, if we believe some observers on human life, its influence is not less, but greater, in the lower than in the higher ranks.

Before I proceed to any further remarks, I must say a few words to prevent or remove a deception which very probably leads many into error on this subject. It is no other than a man's supposing what would not give him happiness cannot give it to another. Because, perhaps, there are few married women, whose persons, conversation, manners and conduct, are altogether to his taste, he takes upon him to conclude that the husbands, in these nume-

rous instances, must lead a miserable life. Is it needful to say any thing to shew the fallacy of this? The tastes and dispositions of men are as various as their faces; and therefore what is displeasing to one may be, not barely tolerable, but agreeable to another. I have known a husband delighted with his wife's fluency and poignancy of speech in scolding her servants, and another who was not able to bear the least noise of the kind with patience.

Having obviated this mistake, it will be proper to observe, that through all the lower and middle ranks of life, there is generally a good measure of matrimonial or domestic comfort, when their circumstances are easy, or their estate growing. This is easily accounted for, not only from their being free from one of the most usual causes of peevishness and discontent, but because the affairs of a family are very seldom in a thriving state, unless both contribute their share of diligence; so that they have not only a common happiness to share, but a joint merit in procuring it. Men may talk in raptures of youth and beauty, wit and sprightliness, and an hundred other shining qualities; but after seven years cohabitation, not one of them is to be compared to good family management, which is seen at every meal, and felt every hour in the husband's purse. To this, however, I must apply the caution given above. Such a wife may not appear quite killing to a stranger on a visit. There are a few distinguished examples of women of the first-rate understandings, who have all the elegance of court breeding in the parlour, and all the frugality and activity of a farmer's wife in the kitchen; but I have not

found this to be the case in general. I learned from a certain author many years ago, that "a great care of household affairs generally spoils the free, careless air of a fine lady," and I have seen no reason to disbelieve it since.

Once more, so far as I have been able to form a judgment, wherever there is a great and confessed superiority of understanding on one side, with some good nature on the other, there is domestic peace. It is of little consequence whether the superiority be on the side of the man or woman, provided the ground of it be manifest. The fiercest contentions are generally where the just title to command is not quite clear. I am sensible I may bring a little ridicule upon myself here. It will be alleged that I have clearly established the right of female authority over that species of husbands known by the name of hen-peckt. But I beg that the nature of my position may be attentively considered. I have said, "Wherever there is a great and confessed superiority of understanding." Should not a man comply with reason, when offered by his wife, as well as any body else? or ought he to be against reason, because his wife is for it? I therefore take the liberty of rescuing from the number of hen-peckt, those who ask the advice, and follow the direction of their wives in most cases, because they are really better than any they could give themselves—reserving those only under the old denomination, who through fear are subject, not to reason, but to passion and ill-humour. I shall conclude this observation with saying, for the honour of the female sex, that I have known a greater number of instances of

just and amiable conduct, in case of a great inequality of judgment, when the advantage was on the side of the woman, than when it was on the side of the man. I have known many women of judgment and prudence, who carried it with the highest respect and decency to weak and capricious husbands; but not many men of distinguished abilities, who did not betray, if not contempt, at least great indifference towards weak or trifling wives.

Some other things I had intended to offer upon this subject, but as the letter has been drawn out to a greater length than I expected, and they will come in with at least equal propriety under other maxims, I conclude at present.



LETTER II.

3. **I**T is by far the safest and most promising way to marry with a person nearly equal in rank, and perhaps in age; but if there is to be a difference, the risk is much greater when a man marries below his rank, than when a woman descends from hers.

The first part of this maxim has been in substance advanced by many writers, and therefore little will need to be said upon it. I must, however, explain its meaning, which is not always clearly comprehended. By equality in rank must be understood equality, not in fortune, but in education, taste, and habits of life. I do not call it inequality, when a gentleman of estate marries a lady who has been

from the beginning brought up in the same class of society with himself, and is in every respect as elegant in her sentiments and manners, but by some incidents that perhaps have lately happened, is unequal to him in point of fortune. I know that from the corrupt and selfish views which prevail so generally in the world, a marriage of this kind is often considered as unequal, and an act of great condescension on the part of the man; but the sentiment is illiberal and unjust. In the same manner, when a lady marries a gentleman of character and capacity, and is in every respect suitable to her, but that his estate is not equal to what she might expect, I do not call it unequal. It is true, parents too frequently prefer circumstances to character, and the female friends of a lady at her own disposal may say in such a case, that she has made a poor bargain. But, taking it still for granted that the fortune only is unequal, I affirm there is nothing in this circumstance that forebodes future dissension, but rather the contrary. An act of generosity never produced a fretful disposition in the person who did it, nor is it reasonable to suppose it will often have that effect on the one who receives it.

The importance, therefore, of equality, arises singly from this circumstance—that there is a great probability that the turn, taste, employments, amusements, and general carriage of the persons so intimately joined, and so frequently together, will be mutually agreeable.

The occasion or motive of first entering into the marriage contract, is not of so much consequence to the felicity of the parties, as what they find after

they are fairly engaged, and cannot return back. When I visit a new country, my judgment of it may be influenced a little, but neither much nor long, by flattering hopes or hideous apprehensions, entertained before actual trial. It has often been said, that dissensions between married people generally take their rise from very inconsiderable circumstances; to which I will add, that this is most commonly the case among persons of some station, sense, and breeding. This may seem odd, but the difficulty is easily solved. Persons of this character have a delicacy on the subject of so close an union, and expect a sweetness and compliance in matters that would not be minded by the vulgar; so that the smallness of the circumstance appears in their eye an aggravation of the offence. I have known a gentleman of rank and his lady part for life, by a difference arising from a thing said at supper, that was not so much as observed to be an impropriety by three-fourths of the company.

This, then, is what I apprehend occasions the importance of equality in rank. Without this equality, they do not understand one another sufficiently for continual intercourse. Many causes of difference will arise, not only sudden and unexpected, but impossible to be foreseen, and therefore not provided against. I must also observe, that an explication or expostulation, in the cases here in view, is more tedious and difficult than any other, perhaps more dangerous and uncertain in the issue. How shall the one attempt to convince the other of an incongruity of behaviour, in what all their former ideas have taught them to believe as innocent

or decent, sometimes even laudable? The attempt is often considered as an insult on their former station, and instead of producing concord, lays the foundation of continual solicitude, or increasing aversion. A man may be guilty of speaking very unadvisedly through intemperate rage, or may perhaps come home flustered with liquor, and his wife, if prudent, may find a season for mentioning them, when the admonition will be received with calmness, and followed by reformation; but if she discovers her displeasure at rusticity of carriage, or meanness of sentiment, I think there is little hope that it will have any effect that is good. The habit cannot be mended; yet he may have sagacity enough to see that the wife of his bosom has despised him in her heart.

I am going to put a case. Suppose that the late _____, who acquired so vast an estate, had married a lady of the first rank, education, and taste, and that she had learned a few anecdotes of his public speeches—that he spoke of *this here* report of *that there* committee, or of a man's being *drowned* on the coast of the *island* of Pennsylvania. Now, I desire to know how she could help pouting, and being a little out of humour, especially if he came home full of inward satisfaction, and was honestly of opinion that he spoke *equally as well* as any other in the House? That things may be fairly balanced, I will put another case. Suppose a gentleman of rank, literature, and taste, has married a tradesman's daughter for the sake of fortune, or from desire, which he calls love, kindled by an accidental glance of a fresh-coloured young woman: suppose her ne-

ver to have had the opportunity of being in what the world calls good company, and, in consequence, to be wholly ignorant of the modes that prevail there; suppose, at the same time, that her understanding has never been enlarged by reading or conversation—in such a case, how soon must passion be fated? and what innumerable causes of shame and mortification must every day produce? I am not certain whether the difficulty will be greater, if she continues the manners of her former, or attempts to put on those of her present station. If any man thinks that he can easily preserve the esteem and attention due to a wife in such circumstances, he will probably be mistaken, and no less so if he expects to communicate refinement by a few lessons, or prevent misbehaviour by fretfulness, or peevish and satirical remarks.

But let me come now to the latter part of the maxim, which I do not remember to have ever met with in any author—that there is a much greater risk when a man marries below his rank, than when a woman marries below her's. As to the matter of fact, it depends entirely on the justness and accuracy of my observations, of which every reader must be left to judge for himself. I must, however, take notice, that when I speak of a woman marrying below her station, I have no view at all to include what there have been some examples of—a gentleman's daughter running away with her father's footman, or a lady of quality with a player, this is, in every instance, an act of pure lasciviousness, and is, without any exception that ever

heard of, followed by immediate shame and future beggary. It has not, however, any more connection with marriage, than the transactions of a brothel, or the memoirs of a kept-mistress. The truth is, elopements in general are things of an eccentric nature; and when I hear of one, I seldom make any further inquiry after the felicity of the parties. But when marriages are contracted with any degree of deliberation, if there be a difference in point of rank, I think it is much better the advantage should be on the woman's side than on the man's; that is to say, marriages of the first kind are usually more happy than the other.

Supposing, therefore, the fact to be as now stated, what remains for me is to investigate a little the causes of it, and point out those circumstances in human tempers or characters, or in the state of society, which give us reason to expect that it will, in most cases, turn out so. Whenever any effect is general, in the moral as well as natural world, there must be some permanent cause, or causes, sufficient to account for it. Shall we assign, as one reason for it, that there is, taking them complexly, more of real virtue and commanding principle in the female sex than in the male, which makes them, upon the whole, act a better part in the married relation? I will not undertake to prove this opinion to be true, and far less will I attempt to refute it, or shew it to be false. Many authors of great penetration have affirmed it; and, doubtless, taking virtue to be the same thing with sound faith and good morals, much may be said in its favour. But there does not appear to me so great a superiority in this

respect, as fully to account for the effect in question. Besides, the advantages which men have in point of knowledge, from the usual course of education, may perhaps balance the superiority of women in point of virtue; for none surely can deny, that matrimonial discord may not arise from ignorance and folly, as well as vice. Allowing, therefore, as much influence to this cause, as every one from his experience and observation may think its due, I beg leave to suggest some other things, which certainly do co-operate with it, and augment its force.

1. It is much easier, in most cases, for a man to improve or rise after marriage to a more elegant taste in life than a woman. I do not attribute this in the least to superior natural talents, but to the more frequent opportunities he has of seeing the world, and conversing with persons of different ranks. There is no instance in which the sphere of business and conversation is not more extensive to the husband than the wife; and, therefore, if a man is married to one of taste superior to his own, he may draw gradually nearer to her, though she descend very little. I think I can recollect more instances than one of a man in business married at first to his equal, and, on a second marriage, to one of higher breeding, when not only the house and family, but the man himself was speedily in a very different style. I can also recollect instances, in which married persons rose together to an opulent estate from almost nothing, and the man improved considerably in politeness, or fitness for public life, but the woman not at all. The old gossips, and the old conversation, continued to the very last. It is not even

without example, that a plain woman, raised by the success of her husband, becomes impatient of the society forced upon her, takes refuge in the kitchen, and spends most of her agreeable hours with her servants, from whom, indeed, she differs nothing but in name. A certain person in a trading city in Great Britain, from being merely a mechanic, turned dealer, and in a course of years acquired an immense fortune. He had a strong desire that his family should make a figure, and spared no expence in purchasing velvets, silks, laces, &c. but at last he found that it was lost labour, and said very truly, that all the money in Great Britain would not make his wife and his daughters *ladies*.

2. When a woman marries below her rank, I think it is, generally speaking, upon better motives than when a man marries below his, and therefore no wonder that it should be attended with greater comfort. I find it asserted in several papers of the Spectator, and I think it must be admitted by every impartial observer, that women are not half so much governed, in their love attachments, by beauty or outward form as men. A man of a very mean figure, if he has any talents, joined to a tolerable power of speech, will often make himself acceptable to a very lovely woman. It is also generally thought, that a woman rates a man pretty much according to the esteem he is held in by his own sex. If this is the case, it is to be presumed that when a man succeeds in his addresses to a lady of higher breeding than his own, he is not altogether void of merit, and therefore will not in the issue disgrace her choice. This will be confirmed by reflecting, that

many such marriages must be with persons of the learned professions. It is past a doubt that literature refines as well as enlarges the mind, and generally renders a man capable of appearing with tolerable dignity, whatever have been the place or circumstances of his birth. It is easy to see that the reverse of all this must happen upon the other supposition. When a man marries below his rank, the very best motive to which it can be attributed, is an admiration of her beauty. Good sense, and other more valuable qualities, are not easily seen under the disguise of low breeding, and when they are seen, have seldom justice done them. Now, as beauty is much more fading than life, and fades sooner in a husband's eye than any other, in a little time nothing will remain but what tends to create uneasiness and disgust.

3. The possession of the graces, or taste and elegance of manners, is a much more important part of a female than a male character. Nature has given a much greater degree of beauty and sweetness to the outward form of women than of men, and has by that means pointed out wherein their several excellencies should consist. From this, in conjunction with the former observation, it is manifest, that the man who finds in his wife a remarkable defect in point of politeness, or the art of pleasing, will be much more disappointed than the woman who finds a like defect in her husband. Many do not form any expectation of refinement in their husbands, even before marriage; not a few, if I am not much mistaken, are rather pleased than otherwise, to think that any who enters the house perceives the dif-

ference between the elegance of the wife, and the plainness, not to say the awkwardness of the husband. I have observed this, even down to the lowest rank. A tradesman's, or country farmer's wife, will sometimes abuse and scold her husband for want of order or cleanliness, and there is no mark of inward malice or ill-humour in that scolding, because she is sensible it is her proper province to be accurate in that matter. I think also, that the husband in such cases is often gratified instead of being offended, because it pleases him to think that he has a wife that does just as she ought to do. But take the thing the other way, and there is no rank of life, from the prince to the peasant, in which the husband can take pleasure in a wife more awkward or more slovenly than himself.

To sum up the whole, if some conformity or similarity of manners is of the utmost consequence to matrimonial comfort; if taste and elegance are of more consequence to the wife than the husband, according to their station; and if it is more difficult for her to acquire it after marriage, if she does not possess it before—I humbly conceive I have fully supported my proposition, that there is a much greater risk in a man's marrying below his station, than a woman's descending from her's.



LETTER III.

I HAVE not yet done with the maxims on matrimonial happiness; therefore observe,

4. That it is not by far of so much consequence,

what are the talents, temper, turn of mind, character, or circumstances of both or either of the parties, as that there be a certain suitableness or correspondence of those of the one to those of the other.

Those essay writers who have taken human nature and life as their great general subject, have many remarks on the causes of infelicity in the marriage union, as well as many beautiful and striking pictures of what would be just, generous, prudent, and dutiful conduct, or their contraries, in particular circumstances. Great pains have been taken also, to point out what ought to be the motives of choice to both parties, if they expect happiness. Without entering into a full detail of what has been said upon this subject, I think the two chief competitors for preference have generally been, good nature and good sense. The advocates for the first say, that as the happiness of married people must arise from a continual interchange of kind offices, and from a number of small circumstances that occur every hour, a gentle and easy disposition, a temper that is happy in itself, must be the cause of happiness to another. The advocates for good sense say, that the sweetness of good nature is only for the honeymoon; that it will either change its nature, and become sour by long standing, or become wholly insipid; so that, if it do not generate hatred, it will at least incur indifference or contempt, whereas good sense is a sterling quality, which cannot fail to produce and preserve esteem, the true foundation of rational love.

If I may, as I believe most people do, take the

prevailing sentiments within the compass of my own reading and conversation, for the general opinion, I think it is in favour of good sense. And if we must determine between these two, and decide which of them is of the most importance when separated from the other, I have very little to say against the public judgment. But in this, as in many other cases, it is only imperfect and general, and often ill understood and falsely applied. There is hardly a more noted saying, than that a man of sense will never use a woman ill, which is true or false according to the meaning that is put upon the phrase, *using a woman ill*. If it be meant, that he will not so probably beat his wife as a fool; that he will not scold or curse her, or treat her with ill manners before company; or, indeed, that he will not so probably keep a continual wrangling, either in public or private, I admit that it is true. Good sense is the best security against indecorums of every kind. But if it be meant, that a man will not make his wife in any case truly miserable, I utterly deny it. On the contrary, there are many instances in which men make use of their sense itself, their judgment, penetration, and knowledge of human life, to make their wives more exquisitely unhappy. What shall we say of those, who can sting them with reflections so artfully guarded, that it is impossible not to feel them, and yet almost as impossible with propriety to complain of them?

I must also observe, that a high degree of delicacy in sentiment, although this is the prevailing ingredient when men attempt to paint refined felicity in the married state, is one of the most danger-

ous qualities that can be mentioned. It is like certain medicines that are powerful in their operation, but at the same time require the utmost caution and prudence as to the time and manner of their being applied. A man or woman of extreme delicacy, is a delightful companion for a visit or a day. But there are many characters which I would greatly prefer in a partner, or a child, or other near relation, in whose permanent happiness I felt myself deeply concerned. I hope nobody will think me so clownish as to exclude sentiment altogether. I have declared my opinion upon this subject, and also my desire that the woman should be the more refined of the two. But I adhere to it, that carrying this matter to an extreme, is of the most dangerous consequence. Your high sentimentalists form expectations which it is impossible to gratify. The gallantry of courtship, and the *bienfiance* of general conversation in the *beau monde*, seem to promise what the downright reality of matrimony cannot afford.

I will here relate a case that fell within my observation. A person of noble birth had been some years married to a merchant's daughter of immense fortune, by which his estate had been saved from ruin. Her education had been as good as money could make it, from her infancy; so that she knew every mode of high life as well as he. They were upon a visit to a family of equal rank, intimately connected with the author of this letter. The manner of the man was distinguished and exemplary. His behaviour to his lady was with the most perfect delicacy. He spoke to her as often as to any

other, and treated her not only with the same complacency, but with the same decency and reserve that he did other ladies. To this he added the most tender solicitude about her not taking cold, about her place in the chamber, and her covering when going abroad, &c. &c. After their departure, the whole family they had left, excepting one, were two or three days expatiating on the beauty of his behaviour. One lady, in particular, said at last, "O, how happy a married woman have I seen!" The single dissentor, who was an elderly woman, then said, "Well, you may be right, but I am of a different opinion; I do not like so perfect and finished a ceremonial between persons who have been married five or six years at least. I observed that he did every thing that he ought to have done, and likewise that she received his civilities with much dignity and good manners, but with great gravity. I would rather have seen him less punctual, and her more cheerful. If, therefore, that lady is as happy in her heart as you suppose, I am mistaken; that is all. But if I were to make a bet upon it, I would bet as much upon the tradesman and his wife, according to the common description, walking to church, the one three or four yards before the other, and never looking back." What did time discover? That nobleman and his lady parted within two years, and never re-united.

Let me now establish my maxim, that it is not the fine qualities of both or either party that will ensure happiness, but that the one be suitable to the other. By their being suitable, is not to be understood their being both of the same turn; but that

the defects of the one be supplied or submitted to by some correspondent quality of the other. I think I have seen many instances, in which gravity, severity, and even moroseness in a husband, where there has been virtue at bottom, has been so tempered with meekness, gentleness, and compliance in the wife, as has produced real and lasting comfort to both. I have also seen some instances, in which sourness, and want of female softness in a woman, has been so happily compensated by easiness and good humour in a husband, that no appearance of wrangling or hatred was to be seen in a whole life. I have seen multitudes of instances, in which vulgarity, and even liberal freedom, not far from brutality in a husband, has been borne with perfect patience and serenity by a wife, who by long custom had become, as it were, insensible of the impropriety, and yet never inattentive to her own behaviour.

As a further illustration, I will relate two or three cases from real life, which have appeared to me the most singular in my experience. I spent some time, many years ago, in the neighbourhood of, and frequent intercourse with a husband and his wife, in the following state. She was not handsome, and at the same time was valetudinary, fretful and peevish—constantly talking of her ailments, dissatisfied with every thing about her; and, what appeared most surprising, she vented these complaints most when her husband was present. He, on the other hand, was most affectionate and sympathizing, constantly upon the watch for any thing that could gratify her desires, or alleviate her dis-

treffes. The appearance for a while surpris'd me, and I thought he led the life of a slave. But at last I discovered that there are two ways of complaining, not suddenly distinguishable to common observers; the one is an expression of confidence, and the other of discontent. When a woman opens all her complaints to her husband, in full confidence that he will sympathize with her, and seeking the relief which such sympathy affords, taking care to keep to the proportion which experience hath taught her will not be disagreeable to him, it frequently increases instead of extinguishing affection.

Take another case as follows. Syrisca was a young woman the reverse of beauty. She got her living in a trading city, by keeping a small shop, not of the millinery kind, which is nearly allied to elegance and high life, but of common grocery goods, so that the poor were her chief customers. By the death of a brother in the East Indies, she came suddenly and unexpectedly to a fortune of many thousand pounds. The moment this was known, a knight's lady in the neighbourhood destined Syrisca as a prize for Horatio, her own brother, of the military profession, on half-pay, and rather past the middle of life. For this purpose she made her a visit, carried her to her house, assisted, no doubt, in bringing home and properly securing her fortune; and, in as short a time as could well be expected, completed her purpose. They lived together on an estate in the country, often visited by the great relations of the husband. Syrisca was good natured and talkative, and therefore often betrayed the meanness of her birth and education, but

was not sensible of it. Good will supplied the place of good breeding with her, and she did not know the difference. Horatio had generosity and good sense, treated her with the greatest tenderness, and having a great fund of facetiousness and good humour, acquired a happy talent of giving a lively or sprightly turn to every thing said by his wife, or diverting the attention of the company to other subjects. The reader will probably say, he took the way that was pointed out by reason, and was most conducive to his own comfort. I say so too; but at the same time affirm, that there are multitudes who could not, or would not have followed his example.

I give one piece of history more, but with some fear, that nice readers will be offended, and call it a caricature. However, let it go. Agrestis was a gentleman of an ancient family, but the estate was almost gone; little more of it remained but what he farmed himself, and indeed his habitation did not differ from that of a farmer, but by having an old tower and battlements. He had either received no education, or had been incapable of profiting by it, for he was the most illiterate person I ever knew who kept any company. His conversation did not rise even to politics, for he found such insuperable difficulty in pronouncing the names of generals, admirals, countries and cities, constantly occurring in the newspapers, that he was obliged to give them up altogether. Of ploughs, waggons, cows, and horses, he knew as much as most men: what related to these, with the prices of grain, and the news

of births and marriages in the parish and neighbourhood, completed the circle of his conversation.

About the age of forty he married Lenia, a young woman of a family equal to him in rank, but somewhat superior in wealth. She knew a little more of the strain of fashionable conversation, but not a whit more of any thing else. She was a flatterer in her person, and of consequence there was neither cleanliness nor order in the family. They had many children; she bore him twins twice—a circumstance of which he was very proud, and frequently boasted of it in a manner not over delicate to those who had not been so fortunate in that particular. They were both good natured and hospitable: if a stranger came, he was made heartily welcome, though sometimes a little incommoded by an uproar among the children and the dogs, when striving about the fire in a cold day; the noise was, however, little less dissonant than the clamours of Agrestis himself, when rebuking the one, or chastening the other, out of complaisance to his guests. The couple lived many years in the most perfect amity, by their being perfectly suitable the one to the other; and I am confident not a woman envied the wife, nor a man the husband, while the union lasted.

It is very easy to see, from these examples, the vast importance of the temper and manner of the one being truly suitable to those of the other. If I had not given histories enough already, I could mention some in which each party, I think, could have made some other man or woman perfectly happy, and yet they never could arrive at happi-

ness, or indeed be at peace with one another. Certainly, therefore, this should be an object particularly attended to in courtships, or while marriage is on the *tapis*, as politicians say.

If I look out for a wife, I ought to consider, not whether a lady has fine qualities, for which she ought to be esteemed or admired, or whether she has such a deportment as I will take particular delight in, and such a taste as gives reason to think she will take delight in me. I may pitch too high, as well as too low, and the issue may be equally unfortunate. Perhaps I shall be told, there lies the great difficulty. How shall we make this discovery? In time of youth and courtship, there is so much studied attention to please, from interested views, and so much restraint from fashion and the observation of others, that it is hard to judge how they will turn out afterwards.

This I confess to be a considerable difficulty, and, at the same time, greatest upon the man's side. The man being generally the eldest, his character, temper and habits, may be more certainly known; whereas there are sometimes great disappointments on the other side, and that happily both ways. I am able just now to recollect one or two instances of giddy and foolish, nay, of idle, lazy, drowsy girls, who, after marriage, felt themselves interested, and became as spirited and active heads of families as any whatever, and also some of the most elegant and exemplary, who, after marriage, fell into a languid stupidity, and contracted habits of the most odious and disgustful kind. These instances, however, are rare, and those who will take the pains to

examine, may in general obtain satisfaction. It is also proper to observe, that if a man finds it difficult to judge of the temper and character of a woman, he has a great advantage on his side, that the right of selection belongs to him. He may ask any woman he pleases, after the most mature deliberation, and need ask no other; whereas a woman must make the best choice she can, of those only who do or probably will ask her. But with these reflexions in our view, what shall we say of the inconceivable folly of those who, in time of courtship, are every now and then taking things in high dudgeon, and sometimes very great submissions are necessary to make up the breaches? If such persons marry, and do not agree, shall we pity them? I think not. After the most serene courtship, there may possibly be a rough enough passage through life; but after a courtship of storms, to expect a marriage of calm weather, is certainly more than common presumption; therefore they ought to take the consequences.

On the whole, I think that the calamities of the married state are generally to be imputed to the persons themselves, in the following proportion: Three-fourths to the man, for want of care and judgment in the choice, and one fourth to the woman on the same score. Suppose a man had bought a farm, and, after a year or two, should, in conversation with his neighbour, make heavy complaints how much he had been disappointed, I imagine his friend might say to him, Did you not see this land before you bought it? O yes, I saw it often. Do you not understand soils? I think I do tolerably.

Did you not examine it with care? Not so much as I should have done: standing at a certain place, it looked admirably well; the fences too were new, and looked exceedingly neat; the house had been just painted a stone colour, with panneling; the windows were large and elegant; but I neglected entirely to examine the sufficiency of the materials, or the disposition of the apartments. There were in the month of April two beautiful springs, but since I have lived here, they have been dry every year before the middle of June. Did you not inquire of those who had lived on the place, of the permanency of the springs? No, indeed, I omitted it. Had you the full measure you were promised? Yes, every acre. Was the right complete and valid? Yes, yes, perfectly good; no man in America can take it from me. Were you obliged to take it up in part of a bad debt? No, nothing like it. I took such a fancy for it all at once, that I pestered the man from week to week to let me have it. Why, really, then, says his friend, I think you had better keep your complaints to yourself. Cursing and fretfulness will never turn stones into earth, or sand into loam; but I can assure you, that frugality, industry, and good culture, will make a bad farm very tolerable, and an indifferent one truly good.

S P E E C H

IN THE

SYNOD OF GLASGOW,

WHEN I WAS ACCUSED OF BEING THE AUTHOR OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

MODERATOR,

IT cannot but give me some pain to think upon my being obliged to stand at your bar, in some fort as a pannel or accused person. At the same time, this is greatly alleviated by the consideration, that I am now called to a regular defence of my character, which has been long abused in the most virulent manner, when I had no opportunity of speaking for myself. But, Sir, before coming to the particular objection which has been pleaded before you, it is necessary that I should endeavour to remove the great odium that has been by some in

the world industriously thrown upon me. Those gentlemen at the bar, by whom I am now constrained to this apology, perhaps know who it was that taught certain persons who knew nothing of me, to represent me as a firebrand, as violent and contentious, unfit to be a member of any quiet society. This is a character, Sir, which I am most unwilling to bear, and which, if I am not greatly mistaken, is most unjustly imputed to me, from any past part of my conduct. I call upon all those with whom I have lived many years in presbytery, to say if they will lay this to my charge. The apostle James tells us, that "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." Perfection I do not plead; but any comparative guilt in this respect I do absolutely refuse. I call particularly upon my nearest neighbour, a minister and co-presbyter, who ought surely to be an unsuspected witness, because we have hardly ever agreed in any principle of church government; yet there hath not been the least jealousy or dryness between us as men, nor even as Christians or ministers; and yet difference in opinion has often caused such things between very good men. I have also, Sir, been many times a member of this synod, sometimes when debates were pretty high, and may safely affirm, that I have been as far from indiscretion and violence as any of those who accuse me. I was none of those, in April 1753, who, in the committee of overtures, spun out the time purposely with long speeches till the synod's hour was come, and then would not suffer the committee to come to any decision, but, unless the synod were immediately constituted, threatened, with

apparent passion and fury, to withdraw, and constitute a separate synod altogether. Probably Mr P——, and Mr M——, may be able to inform you who the persons were; and I assure you from my own knowledge, that such conduct in clergymen was very astonishing and offensive to some of the laity. I have been told, that at the admission of the Rev. Mr Baine, in Pailley, the person who admitted him, among other advices, told him to beware of a party-spirit; and in this, another member said, he spoke the sense of the whole presbytery. I am convinced there are some persons who, by a party spirit, mean a person having different principles from themselves; and that no meekness of temper, no purity of character, no humanity in his carriage, will, in that case, save an opponent from such an imputation. And if by a party spirit be understood a regard to the person, as much as the cause, and prosecuting their own purposes in a violent and illegal manner, without candour or charity to those who differ from them, I know none who have a juster title to the character, than some members of that reverend body. Several instances might be given in their past conduct to justify this observation, some of which perhaps I shall afterwards mention; the rest are well enough known, and indeed it seems to be generally agreed by the world about them, that they are not over patient of mixture.

This, Sir, very plainly appears from the case now before you. This presbytery have refused leave to grant even a call to me, upon a presentation and unanimous application from all concerned; and as-

sign this reason for it, that there is a report of my being author of a book, which, they say in their minutes, is of a very bad tendency to the interests of religion, and injurious to the characters of many ministers of this church, and therefore they appointed a committee, &c. The injury done to the town of Paisley, it is the business of the congregation to complain of, and they have done it, and wait for redress from you. The injury done to me, I beg leave, in a few words, to represent to this venerable synod. And here, Sir, I do not complain of their taking into consideration any book that they shall be pleased to think contrary to the interests of religion, and should have been well satisfied to hear of a motion for censuring irreligious books come from that quarter. I wish, if ever it come from any quarter, they may faithfully inspect it. But, Sir, I complain that they have joined my name to a certain book with which they are not pleased, and then have passed a sentence condemning it, when I was not, and could not regularly be before them. This is a case that may have important consequences. All I desire is equity and justice, and that surely I have a right to claim. The presbytery of Paisley, Sir, had a right to accuse me, if they pleased, before the presbytery of which I am a member. But they had no right at all to condemn, or even to judge me themselves, and much less when I was not heard. Perhaps it will be said they have not found me guilty, but proposed a peaceable manner of trying whether I was so or not; but, Sir, have they not found by their sentence the relevancy

of the crime, against which, as well as the proof, any accused person has a right to be heard?

The injury they have done me, and the unjust and tyrannical method of their proceedings, appear in the most evident manner from the situation in which I now stand, and the manner of the cause being pleaded before you. You see with what difficulty they were hindered, or rather that they could not be hindered from entering into the merits of the cause, and endeavouring to persuade the synod to condemn this book to which they have joined my name, before they have so much as let me know the nature and form of the process against me, and when I have had no opportunity to see and answer their charge. This is against all rule, for by the form of process it ought to have begun at the presbytery of Irvine; and whether it be taken up upon the footing of a *fama clamosa*, or a libel from a particular accuser, there must still be virtually a libel in the view of the court; but by bringing it in here, in the manner they have done, and pleading upon it, they are endeavouring to get a law made, as it were *ex post facto*, upon which I may be condemned hereafter; and they have reduced me to the necessity of pleading in defence of a book with which I do not, nor ever did pretend any connection, unless I would give a sanction to a method of proceeding pregnant with tyranny and injustice. So that, though I come to the synod for justice, it is really hardly possible for you fully to grant it, because you cannot wholly understand the bad effects of the presbytery's wrong procedure. I am sensible, Sir, that it would be giving up the very point

which I am chiefly to plead, if I should enter into the merits of the cause so far as to consider the particulars contained in this book, whether they are just or unjust, true or false. But I must beg leave to consider a little in general, whether the crime of which they think proper to suspect me, was so certainly and self-evidently relevant that they might take it for granted, and insert it in their minutes, without so much as having the book before them, or mentioning the offensive passages; which I should think were necessary even in the worst book that can be conceived—and to all this join my name without suffering me to be heard.

And here, Sir, I should think that modesty and common decency might have led them to determine otherwise. Had they not before themselves the unanimous application of a large and numerous people to call me to be their minister? Did not these people know of the rumour of my being author of this book, before they entered into this resolution? and are they all so abandoned as to call an enemy to all rules to watch for their souls? Did not the presbytery know, that the person so suspected had been a member of a presbytery for some years after the suspicion began? that he had been a member of this synod with themselves? nay, a member of the supreme court of this church, and no notice taken of it at all? nay, are they so ignorant as not to know, that a very great majority of this nation find no fault with the book at all? and any person professing himself the author, would not thereby in the least degree forfeit their esteem. Pray, Sir, was it, is it, could it be just in this case, to conclude it cri-

minimal without debate or examination? I mean not by this to justify the book in every particular; perhaps, if it comes to be examined, I may join in condemning it, at least some parts; but I insist that this shews the precipitateneſs, the partiality, and injustice of the presbytery, in the sentence which they passed. It looks as if they themselves were struck at in the performance, and acted as interested persons. And indeed I would gladly ask them, whether they think themselves pointed at in the pamphlet? and if they think so, and at the same time ascribe it to me, whether it is just and equitable that they should be my judges who are supposed to be aggrieved?

There is another general consideration, that shews how unjust and precipitate this sentence was, and that there is really no belief of the thing being so criminal as they have taken for granted, among those who must be most unprejudiced and impartial judges. It is read in England, and the presbytery of Paisley do, or may know the sentiments that are entertained of it there. I have been well informed that the present Bishop of London, in conversation with a nobleman of our own country, gave it great commendation; and withal added, it seems only directed at a certain party in the church of Scotland, but we want not very many in the church of England, to whom the characters are very applicable. And, Sir, I have seen a letter from the Rev. Mr Warburton to a minister in Scotland, and it has been seen by several ministers here present, in which he commends the performance, and particularly calls it a fine piece of rallery against a party to

which, says he, we are no strangers here. Is it to be supposed, Sir, that distinguished persons for worth and penetration would commend and approve a thing so evidently criminal as the presbytery of Paisley are pleased to think? Are persons of the character there represented to be found in the church of England? Where, then, is the church of Scotland's charter of security, that none shall ever arise in her deserving such a reprimand? Shall such names as these mentioned, openly affirm that there are such in England? and must the man be condemned, without hearing and without mercy, who is but suspected of hinting that there may be such in her sister church? I have often, indeed, since the commencement of this business, reflected on the different situation of affairs in Scotland and England. I have seen I know not how many books in England, printed with the authors names, which plainly, and without ambiguity, affirm, that there are some of the clergy proud, ambitious, time-servers, and tools to those in power; some of them lazy and slothful, lovers of ease and pleasure; some of them scandalous and dissolute in their manners; some ignorant and insufficient—and these things they affirm without the least danger, or apprehension of it; but, I believe, were I to publish a book that had the tenth part of such severity in it in Scotland, I ought at the same time to have a ship hired to flee to another country. I shall not pretend to account for this difference, but only affirm, and I am myself a standing evidence that it doth really subsist; and at the same time it is attended by a very odd circumstance,

for reproaches are criminal when thrown out by one set against the other, but not in the least so when thrown out, or thrown back, by that other against the first. Many here present will remember what a set of overtures were brought into this synod in April 1753, by some of the very persons who are now standing at the bar: one of them set forth the grievous crime of bringing our public differences with one another into the pulpit; and yet, strange to think, the only sermon that ever I heard in my life in which this was done, was by one of my present accusers, who, Sir, fell bloodily upon those ministers who bawl out against the law of the land as a grievance, instead of giving it that obedience which becomes good subjects. It indeed was his ignorance to find fault with that expression which is used even by the sacred infallible General Assembly, in the annual instructions to their commissioners. Is it not also well known, that a pamphlet was published, called, "The Just View of the Constitution," which common, uncontradicted fame, which is not my case, attributes to Mr H—, and published many months before the one for which I am now accused? This pamphlet represents us all, in general, as not acting upon conscience, but from a love of popularity, or in the words of the ingenious Mr T— of Cowan, "not conscience, but a spirit of faction and a love of dominion." And, besides this, it tells a story, which it calls a scene of iniquity, with the initial letters of the names of the persons concerned. Was ever this pamphlet charged by these gentlemen, my opponents, as contrary to the interest of religion? At

the same time, I should be glad to know what it is that makes the discovery of a scene of iniquity, if committed by some whom I must not name, contrary to the interest of religion; but the discovery of a scene of iniquity, supposed to be committed by Mr Webster, or some others of us, nothing contrary to it at all. I am not able to discover any reason for this difference of judgment, but one that is not very honourable to them, viz. These scenes of iniquity supposed to be committed by them, are more probable in themselves, and actually obtain more credit, than those which they throw out against us. I do not affirm that that is the reason, but I think, since they have been the aggressors, both in censuring us for scrupling obedience to some of their decisions, and attacking our characters in print, if some nameless author has with great success retaliated the injury of the last kind, they ought to lie as quietly under it as possible, both from equity and prudence—from equity, because they have given the provocation; from prudence, because it will bring many to say, that charge must have been just, or it would have been treated with contempt; surely that stroke must have been well aimed, the wound must have been very deep, since the scar continues so long, and is never like to be either forgotten or forgiven.

But, Sir, I must confess I am amazed at the boldness, as well as the violence of those gentlemen, considering the land in which we live. Is it not, and do we not glory in its being a land of liberty? Is it then a land of civil liberty, and yet of ecclesiastical tyranny? Must not a man have equity and

justice in the church, as well as the state? Are there not every day published in this nation, as severe, nay, much severer censures, of the greatest characters in the kingdom, and possessing the highest offices? Are there not attacks upon our sovereign himself, and his august family, many times made in print, and yet passed unheeded? and must the least attempt to shew that there are corruptions among the clergy, be an unpardonable crime? I have seen it insisted on in print, that as soon as the liberty of the press is taken away, there is an end of every shadow of liberty. And as of late years it hath been very frequent to borrow from what is customary in the civil government, and apply it to the church, I shall beg leave to borrow this maxim, and to affirm, that so soon as it is not permitted in general to lash the characters of churchmen, there is established a sacerdotal tyranny, which always was, and always will be, of the most cruel, relentless, and illegal kind. But the worst of all is still behind, which I am ashamed to mention in the presence of so many of the laity, because of the reproach which it brings upon our church. There have been published among us writings directly levelled against religion itself, taking away the very foundation of morality, bringing in doubt the being of God, and treating our Redeemer's name with contempt and derision. Writings of this kind have been publicly avowed, with the author's name prefixed. Where has been the zeal of the presbytery of Paisley against such writings? Have they moved for the exercise of discipline against the authors? Have they supported the motion when made by

others? I am afraid, Sir, this prosecution will give many just ground to say, as was said an age ago by Moliere in France, and by some there upon occasion of his writings, that a man may write against God Almighty what he pleases, in perfect security, but if he write against the characters of the clergy in power, he is ruined for ever.

I am sensible, Sir, that they have said, even at this bar, as indeed they and their emissaries in conversation have often alleged, that the quarrel they have at the pamphlet, is its hurtful tendency to the interest of religion; nay, they have often said, that one who could write in that style and manner against his brethren, cannot possibly be a good man; and that has been commonly said, even upon the supposition of the truth of the facts and characters contained in the book. This, Sir, I would have had nothing to do with, but would have suffered the book to answer for itself, since its author does not think proper to appear in its defence, if they had not been pleased to load me with the suspicion of it. For removing this odium, by which alone it is that they have made an impression on some good men, I observe in general, that it is not conceivable that a thing should be a certain mark of a bad man, which is approved by, and conveys no such idea to so great a number of unquestionable characters. But, besides, let us consider a little the nature of the thing:

1. It is written ironically.
2. It is supposed to attack the characters and credit of a part of the clergy of the church of Scotland.

As to the first of these, far be it from me to assert that ridicule is the test of truth. Many here present know how uni-

formly, and how strenuously I have maintained the contrary. It is, however, many times useful to disgrace known falsehood, and such practices as to be despised need only to be exposed; that it is a lawful thing to make such an use of it, is evident from the highest authority. There are many instances of irony in the sacred writings. In Gen. iii. 22. we have an expression put into the mouth of God himself, which many, perhaps most interpreters, suppose to be an irony; and as it is of the most severe and cutting kind, in a most deplorable case, so I do not see that another interpretation can be put upon the words: "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." The conduct of Elijah, and his treatment of the prophets of Baal, 1 Kings xviii. 27. is another example of the same kind: "And it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." There are a good many instances of it in the prophets, which I omit, to save time, as the thing is undeniable, and only further mention an expression of our Saviour himself, who, though a man of sorrows and in a state of humiliation, yet in some places uses a language plainly ironical, as in John x. 31. "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father, for which of these works do ye stone me?"

And as the instances of such writing in the word of God, sufficiently warrants the use of it, so it is founded upon the plainest reason. There are two distinct qualities of truth and piety; a divine beauty,

which renders them amiable, and a holy majesty, which renders them venerable: and there are also two distinct qualities of error and impiety; a criminal guilt, which renders them the object of horror, and a delusion and folly, which renders them silly and contemptible—and it is fit and proper that the children of God should have both of these sentiments of hatred and contempt with regard to them. And the last is often necessary, as well as the first, in combating corruptions. There is, for ordinary, a pride and self-sufficiency in wicked men, which makes them deaf to advice, and impregnable to sober and serious reasoning; nor is there any getting at them, till their pride is levelled a little with this dismaying weapon. Many of the ancient fathers of the Christian church, both used this manner of writing, and asserted its necessity. There is one passage of Tertullian which I shall translate, because it is very much to the purpose. “There are many things which ought to be treated with contempt and mockery, through fear of giving them weight, and making them too important by seriously debating them. Nothing more is due to vanity than derision; and it belongs to the truth to smile, because it is cheerful, and to despise its enemies, because it is assured of victory. It is true, that we ought to be careful that the raillery be not low and unworthy of the truth; but if that is taken care of, and we can make use of it with address and delicacy, it is a duty to do so.” To this I shall add another passage from St Augustine: “Who will dare to say that the truth ought to remain defenceless against the attacks of falsehood? That the enemies of reli-

gion shall be permitted to terrify the faithful with strong words, and to entice and seduce them by agreeable terms of wit ; but that believers ought never to write, but with such a coldness of style as to lull the reader asleep?"

Enough surely has been said in defence of the manner of writing ; and as to the subject of it, attacking the characters of clergymen, I am altogether at a loss to know what is that argument in reason, or that precept in Scripture, which makes it criminal to censure them when they deserve it. That their station, like that of all other persons of influence, or in public employment, should make men very tender and cautious how they take up an evil report against them, and never to do it except upon good ground, I allow ; but when the church is really bad, I hold it as a just principle, that as it is in them doubly criminal, and doubly pernicious, so it ought to be exposed with double severity. And this is so far from being contrary to the interests of religion, that nothing can be more honourable to it, than to shew that there are some so bold as to reprove, and so faithful as to withstand the corruptions of others. How far secret wickedness should be concealed, and scenes of iniquity not laid open, and so sin turned into scandal in ministers, is a matter that would require a very careful and accurate discussion, and admit of many exceptions ; but if in any case erroneous doctrine, or degeneracy of life, is plain and visible, to render them completely odious must be a duty ; and when it is not done, it makes men conclude we are all combined together, like Demetrius and the craftsmen, and more con-

cerned for our own power and credit, than the interest and benefit of those committed to our charge. Those who think that no good man can attack the character of the clergy, I would just remind of the attack made upon the Jesuits in France, about one hundred years ago, by the gentlemen of the Port-Royal, a society of Jansenists of great parts and eminent piety, particularly by Monsieur Pascal, in his Provincial Letters, which are written almost entirely in the way of ridicule; and the very objection was made against them by the Jesuits at that time, that is now made against this piece. Will any man now conclude from them, that Pascal was a bad man, whom all history testifies to have been as pious and unbiassed to the world as any of his time?

I hope, Sir, what hath been said thus in general on the species of writing, and the subject of this book, will convince every impartial member of this synod, that the presbytery of Paisley have acted in a most unjust and illegal manner, in passing the sentence they have done upon it in my absence, and without any examination. It is necessary that I should now also speak a little to the method of inquiry which they resolved upon, by appointing a committee of their number privately to interrogate me. And indeed, Sir, the method is so full of absurdity and tyranny, that I know not well where to begin in speaking upon it. They have no where indeed told what were to be the consequences, if their suspicions were found to be just. Perhaps the presbytery of Paisley would have passed sentence of deposition against me in my absence, which would

have been but ending as they began, contrary to law and justice. But, whatever were their particular intentions, by their violent and illegal stretches of power in falling upon it, they were plainly of the worst kind; and it always put me in mind of a friar of the inquisition, with an unhappy person before them, whom they want to convict that they may burn him, stroking him, and saying to him in the spirit of meekness, Confess, my son, confess!

Sir, if these gentlemen supposed me endued with the least degree of common understanding, this method was excessively absurd; and whether they did or not, it was full of injustice. This committee being appointed by the court, and the appointment inserted on the records of the presbytery, I just ask, were they not to make a report to the next meeting of the presbytery, of all their private conversation with me? Would not this also be ingrossed in the minutes, and make a part of the process under their cognizance? Could I be present at their next meeting, to be the least check or controul upon their report? or would they regard any of my corrections of their committee's report, if I could? In this situation, no man of common sense would have had any conversation with them but by writing, so that he might be sure nothing would be reported but his own words. For I would not trust the most impartial person in the world to report any conversation with me, upon a matter in which he seemed to be keenly interested, or to have very different sentiments from me. The power of prejudice would give a tincture to the representation; nay, the least forgetfulness would create some variance. And if

they supposed me simple enough to converse with them, what must they have been to take such advantage of my simplicity?

Further, Sir, this method of inquiry was very absurd, because self-contradictory. They load a man with the suspicion of writing a book contrary to the interest of religion, and containing many falsehoods, and then they pretend to ask this man if he had done so, saying that they will be well satisfied if he shall deny it. These suppositions destroy one another. If his veracity be so entirely to be depended on, either he must not be the author of the book, or it is impossible it can contain the falsehoods that are alleged; for if he will lie in print to defame his brethren, he will surely never scruple to lie in conversation to save himself from ruin. Therefore, Sir, I do affirm, that appointing a committee to confer with me was highly absurd, or Jesuitically cunning. For if my word is so much to be depended on as they give out, it is a clear and complete vindication of me from their charge, and that out of their own mouths. But perhaps they were more cunning than absurd, and intended first to make me deny the thing formally, and then adduce it as a proof, and to aggravate the crime.

But, Sir, they pretend that in this they are only acting in the spirit, and following the rules of the gospel, particularly that rule of our Saviour, "If thy brother trespass against thee," &c. It is surprising to hear any speaking in the name of such a body make use of this argument. I would not give my judgment for having a man to preach the gospel, who is capable of giving such an interpretation to that text.

It evidently and undeniably relates only to private offence or personal injury. "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Here, Sir, nobody has any thing to do with it but the person injured; if by confession or reparation he is satisfied, the matter is ended. But will any man say, that this is to be applied to cases public in their nature, and against which, if true, a process and public censure is intended? If any of the presbytery of Paisley, supposing themselves pointed at in that book, had previously come to me when the report rose; or suppose they had at any time, as private persons, spoke to me on the subject, they would have found no man more ready to commune with them, and give them all satisfaction due from one Christian to another. But, Sir, after proceeding as a court in the manner above represented; after illegally finding it criminal, and making it the ground of stopping a settlement—then to appoint a committee privately to interrogate me as to the fact, it is, in my humble opinion, a violation of justice for them to attempt it, a perversion of the word of God to build it upon that text, and it would be yielding up the natural rights of mankind, if I should be so tame as to submit to it.

Again, Sir, they pretend that their conduct is exactly conformable to the form of process, and the practice founded upon it in the case of other scandals, where the very first means of proof is dealing with the accused person's conscience, to bring him to a confession. And here, Sir, I must say before this synod, that I am not only humbly willing to

stand or fail by this form of process, but that I am resolved to assert and maintain my right to be judged by it, and by it alone, and not by the arbitrary proceedings of some modern clergymen. A general observation is necessary here, that this form of process doth universally proceed upon scandals, the relevancy of which is acknowledged, and cannot be denied. Now, this is by no means the case here, as is evident from my continuing so long in the ministerial character after the rise of the report, as well as many other considerations suggested above; and therefore, at any rate, the relevancy must be first proved, before there can be any propriety of asking for a confession, and dealing with the conscience. It is true, they have in their minutes found the relevancy; but whether this has been according to the rules in the form of process, I could almost allow even themselves to be judges; for I dare say they would hardly do it a second time.

But now, after we have left this in its full force, let us suppose that the matter objected were only of a scandalous nature, and let us go to the 7th chapter in the form of process concerning ministers, and see whether the method there prescribed has been observed in this case. But, Sir, as the whole affair is full of irregularity, and involved in darkness and confusion by the precipitate or artful conduct of the presbytery, so there is a particular difficulty which arises from the strange and ambiguous light in which they appear. Those who read the style and directions of the form of process, will plainly see that such a case as that now before you, was never con-

templated by the compilers of it. It is difficult to say, whether they are to be considered as private Christians offended and accusing, or the occasion of the accusation, or as a church court taking the affair under their cognizance for judgment. They seem to have considered themselves as both. This I can never yield to ; but they shall be at liberty to be either of them they think proper. And so I shall consider them first in the one light, and then in the other.

1. If they be considered as Christians offended, and the accusers or occasion of the accusation, the rule is to be found in the 4th part of the 7th chapter of the form of process, " All Christians," &c. Here then, Sir, I complain of them, that they have not done as Christians, not even what they resolved to do as a court, and very much out of time. Have they been wary in accusing me? Have they abstained from publishing or spreading the scandal? Have they, these three years bypast, conversed with me on the subject? Have they not in the controversy every where called it a heinous crime, though they knew that was far from being generally yielded, and would not probably be yielded by me? Nay, now instead of privately conversing with me, during the seven weeks delay of the affair, without assigning a reason, have they not recorded it in their register? Have they not made it a part of a process, disqualifying me for a call? I leave any one to judge, whether this was following the rule laid down in the form of process. Besides, they act not only as private persons, but judges ; or at least are making the inquiry themselves, that they may know

whether they may desire the presbytery of Irvine to do it after them.

2. Let us consider them as a church court, taking the affair under their cognizance for judgment. Here, to be sure, there is a monstrous impropriety. For, supposing them to have taken ever so just steps in other respects, I was never before them, I cannot be before them, I am not subject to them. Yet, Sir, as it cannot be before the synod in any other way than they have been pleased to take it up in, let us see how agreeable it is to the form of process, and whether they are ready to deal with me for a confession. The form of process mentions three ways of taking up a scandal against a minister. The two first none pretends to hold in this case; the last is, part 3, last clause, "that the *fama clamorosa*," &c. Now, can any man say that this condition holds in the present case. Is this so scandalous in the eyes of the people, that a presbytery would be reproached if they let it pass. If there be any such *fama*, it is very silent; for I never heard of any fault found with the presbytery of Irvine, to whom it naturally fell to do it. On the contrary, I do affirm, because I am able to prove, that the presbytery of Paisley's taking it up, with very many, brings reproach upon them. Again, do they follow the rule prescribed even when that condition exists? Have they inquired into the rise, occasion, branches and grounds, of this *fama clamorosa*? This they were the more bound to do, that it is far from being an uncontradicted *fama*; so far from it, that the very prevailing *fama* is, not that I am the author, but some how concerned in it. They

themselves express it some such way in their minutes. This makes all the arguments about their passing over the relevancy every way strong; because a man might have some accession to the publishing of a book in which some very bad things were; and without examination, or specifying what this accession was, it would be very hard to judge him guilty of the worst, or of the whole. To say the truth, some of their wellwishers have made it a very dishonourable *fama* for me, saying that I helped to contrive the mischief, to collect the calumnies, but had not skill enough to give it its dress and form. Should not they have inquired then into the grounds of this *fama*? and have they ever done it?

Further, in the fifth paragraph of that chapter of the form of process, it is expressly appointed, that even after a process is begun upon a *fama clamosa*, the court must give a liberal and competent time to answer it; and the accused person is to be heard upon the relevancy. This is, Sir, upon the relevancy in the way the facts are laid, even concerning a thing confessedly scandalous; and all this, before the court are to endeavour to bring him to a confession. From this, then, it is clear and evident, that however lawful or prudent it might be for private persons to commune with a man himself, till this be done, there is no warrant from the form of process for a court to appoint any examination and inquiry; on the contrary, it is making, instead of mending a scandal. And if this is the rule in cases confessedly of a scandalous nature, it holds much more strongly in what is now before you.

The truth is, this is not only the order of proceeding expressly laid down with regard to ministers, but it is common equity, and in substance the same with the case of scandal in all other cases, and with respect to all other persons. For though when a particular accuser against a man appears, laying to his charge a gross crime, such as uncleanness, it seems to be due to his own character, as well as to the Public, that he should profess innocence; yet it often happens, that when the accusation appears wanton and malicious, he puts the accuser upon the proof, and refuses to give any other satisfaction. And whenever any person does so, though the court may think it obstinacy and stateliness, or that they cannot fully approve his conduct, yet they never condemn him on that account, but dismiss the process for want of sufficient light. And I have seen several cases of this sort, in which the court absolutely refused to put a man to his oath, or even ask him if he was willing to swear, unless there were some more presumption than the bare accusation. And indeed this is required in the form of process. This, however, is stating the case too strongly. But if there be no particular accuser, but a vague and general *fama*, would it be tolerable for a court to call any gentleman whom they shall be pleased to suspect, and put him upon an inquiry, whether he was ever guilty of the sin of uncleanness? I dare say such a measure would be detested by every reasonable man.

But you will say, here is a *corpus debiti*. Then let me suppose a case exactly parallel—that a child were exposed in a gentleman's neighbourhood, no

mother appearing or accusing, but an idle rumour arises, that perhaps it may be his, or it may have been somebody about his house, and he accessory to the commission of the crime; would it in that case be reasonable and just, would it be according to the form of process, to call him, and interrogate him, whether he had ever, or for twelve months preceding, been guilty of the crime of uncleanness—without making any previous inquiry as to the rise of the affair, or probability of the imputation? So, in this case, here is a child of the brain exposed to the world; the mother, that is to say, the press or the publisher, accuses nobody, nay, pretends that it is lawfully begotten. A vague rumour lays it to me. This hath never been inquired into, though the first broacher of it might easily be found; and yet I must be interrogated by a court to whom I am not subject, with whom, as yet, as a court, I have nothing to do. In short, Sir, what I would do if I were so irregularly attacked, and charged with a crime highly and confessedly scandalous, I do not know, and hope I shall never have occasion to deliberate upon it. But in this vague and illegal accusation of a doubtful crime, and a crime, perhaps, chiefly or only in the eyes of those who accuse me and their adherents, I hope I will be approved by every impartial person in standing up for the rights of mankind, and refusing to answer *super enquirendis*.

I could here put the synod in mind of a question of this nature, which came before the church of Scotland in Professor S——'s process. He refused to answer some queries put to him by the pres-

bytery of Glasgow, although they arose from, and were founded upon some writings given in by himself. This was debated before the Assembly, and rejected by them, as they would give no encouragement to inquisitorial proceedings.

But, Sir, nothing can demonstrate more clearly the iniquity of such practices, than what happened not long ago in this very presbytery, which is but little known, but which I am able to bring to light. And after I have narrated it, I leave it to the judgment of the synod, whether they will countenance with their authority any similar practice in another case. When Mr C—— was presented to the Abbey Church of Paisley, there were some rumours raised, I know not how, as if he had been guilty of some practices tending to disaffection. These, I may safely say, were not discouraged by the presbytery, but mentioned again and again in their minutes; and though the candidate insisted much upon a regular judgment upon the relevancy, and an inquiry, they still shifted both, and, instead thereof, appointed a conference with him. And what think you were the questions they put to him to remove the scandal?—Where did you learn your English? and what minister of the established church did you hear? Where did you learn your Latin? and in whose house did you stay? Did you ever go near the Episcopal meeting-house all the time you were at the profession of divinity? Did Mr H—— or Mr R——, Episcopal ministers, recommend you to C——'s family? Did your father attend ordinances in the parish church where he lived? Have you any near relations that are related to the mini-

sters of this church? We ask this, say they, that we may know the dispositions of your friends. What could be the intention of these questions? What could be the effect of their being answered, one way or the other? Might not the most loyal man in Britain be brought under an odium in this manner? I flatter myself I am of as untainted, unsuspected loyalty, as any man in the presbytery of Paisley, and yet I could not affirm that I had never lodged in a disaffected person's house, nor had the friendship of any such; nor that I never came near the Episcopal meeting-house all the time I was at the profession of divinity. And did not these gentlemen know that such things were perfectly frivolous and irrelevant? Yes, Sir, they knew it well; but still they served their purpose of disobliging that people, and infusing jealousies. And so they mysteriously express themselves in their answer to the reasons of appeal, that there are such unhappy circumstances in the presentee's character, as do not recommend him to the choice of this people. I will not say, Sir, that all I have above represented is now to be found in their register, for they have a salutary art of expunging from their minutes any thing that is dishonourable to themselves; but this I will say, it actually happened, and a great deal more. And I dare say, if there be any Episcopalian here present, he will instantly add to his litany, From such Spanish Presbyterians, good Lord deliver us!

Thus, Sir, I hope I have made it appear, that the presbytery of Paisley have been guilty of most irregular procedure, and flagrant injustice to me, in

passing a sentence upon my character, where they had no title to judge me; in finding a relevancy without examination of the subject, and when I could not be heard in my defence; and, lastly, in appointing an inquisition for discovering the fact, directly in the face of law and equity.

I am sorry I have detained the synod so long, Sir, but could not possibly speak to this involved, perplexed accusation, in shorter time; and I hope the importance of the cause to me, will plead for some indulgence, and procure your attention for a very few minutes longer, and then I have done. Let me, Sir, speak plainly out: whatever may be pretended about the interest of religion being concerned in the fate of this pamphlet, there is strong reason to suspect, that it is the credit of a party that is really at stake. We all know that there are very great differences of sentiment among us, as to the government of the church; and it seems to be my misfortune, to be of opposite principles from several members of this presbytery on that point. This is the cause of my being charged with ill-nature and unpeaceableness. They themselves, Sir, will not pretend to give any other instance of this temper; and I confess, that as I reckon the glory of God, and the edification of his church, to be deeply concerned in the cause, I am resolved, in his strength, to maintain and support it to the utmost of my power, so long as I draw breath; and if I have been a firebrand, as I have been sometimes called, I wish I could answer the title, and burn their pernicious schemes even to ashes. And, Sir, as in no

other case have I ever discovered any keenness of temper, so I trust, that even in this, I have neither discovered an overbearing pride, or perverseness of temper, but have supported what I esteemed to be truth with resolution, but without violence. I cannot pretend to the polite and courtly style, in the same degree with some of my opposers, yet have I endeavoured to preserve the meekness of a Christian, believing that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Now, Sir, I beg every wise and honest man of the other side of the question in our public differences, to determine seriously, whether he will approve of a presbytery's making personal opposition, and because a man is not in every respect of their way of thinking, barring his settlement to the utmost of their power; and whether it be decent, or truly moderate, not only to rebuke, suspend, and deprive those who cannot go with them, but, as the very last effort of tyranny, to attempt to cast out any who are but suspected of debating the point in writing.

Farther, I beg every man in this house, to lay his hand upon his heart, and say this day, in his judgment, whether he will, in order to reach a man of a different party from himself, approve of going contrary to all form and law, and establishing a precedent of inquisition. However secure some may think themselves and their party at present, there is such an instability in all human things, that the engines which they prepare against others may be directed against themselves. I know a fear of this kind, for the most part, operates but weakly upon mens' minds, because the causes that may afterwards

cast up cannot be clearly discerned, being hidden in the darknefs of futurity ; but, Sir, he is the wifeft man that acts with moft prudence, and does not expofe himfelf or his friends to the law of retaliation. This I fpeak in perfect fecurity as to myfelf, for if the church fhall find that interrogation is a proper way of inquiring into facts, it will but open to me a larger field of information ; and though it come to the real merits of this caufe, the trial of the relevancy of this crime objected to me will take up at leaft feven years, in proceffes of various kinds.

To conclude, Sir, though I will never approve of, or give my confent for eftablifhing a practice which I think unjuft and tyrannical, yet as to my own cafe, I will even fubmit to be interrogated by this very party, upon this juft, this felf-evidently juft condition, that the minifters of that prefbytery do fubmit themfelves to be interrogated by me in turn, on their doctrine, their diligence in pastoral duty, their care and government of their families, and their personal truth. If they will yield to this, I will anfwer upon oath, either instantly, or upon a month's preparation, not only as to this point, but all that they fhall think fit to afk, as to my character, from my birth to this day. And if this condition be refufed, the equity of their conduct I leave to the judgment of this venerable fynod.

AN
HUMBLE SUPPLICATION

TO SUCH OF

THE NOBILITY AND GENTRY OF SCOTLAND AS ARE
ELDERS OF THE CHURCH, AND MEMBERS OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

MUCH HONOURED,

YOU will surely be sensible, that it must have been a very urgent necessity that has compelled a man of my station and profession to become an author, especially when I address myself to you, whose circumstances set you at so great a distance from me, and may, without that candour and condescension on your part, provoke you to contemn that advice which is offered voluntarily, and from such a hand. And indeed there is nothing of which I am more firmly persuaded, than that the affairs of the church of Scotland are drawing fast towards a crisis, and that a little time will determine whether

she will sink or swim. This view of things cannot fail to constrain every one who hath any regard to her prosperity and welfare, of which number I hope I shall always be, so long as I draw breath, to exert himself to the utmost for her support, and also to spread the alarm, and call on others to assist, who have more ability and opportunity to be useful.

On this occasion I am emboldened to address myself to you, not only as by your quality and station you are able to contribute much to a change of the measures that have lately prevailed, but as your office of elders in the church may be presumed to incline you to be ready and active for her prosperity and support. I intended once to have styled you *brethren*, because I also am an elder, but was afraid of giving offence by too forward and assuming an introduction; however, I still hope for some regard in consequence of this relation, because I have ever observed, that a likeness of character, a participation of the same office, or indeed a likeness in almost any considerable circumstance, creates a kind of connection, and produces a sympathy or fellow-feeling, between the very highest and lowest that fall under the same denomination. The inhabitants of the same city, though very different in their stations, reckon themselves interested in one another. Those of the same corporation are still more closely connected. And there is a certain society, comprehending persons of very distant characters in other respects, who are said to have an extraordinary tenderness for each other's concerns—the society I mean is that of Free-masons; for I am told a Free-

maſon, though a king, will ſhew a very great affection for a brother, although a beggar, or at leaſt the next thing to it, if there be no real beggars in that community.

It is not without a very important deſign that I have mentioned this, for I have obſerved ſome of late have endeavoured to ſtate a diſtinction, or perhaps I may call it, to ſow ſedition, between the great elders of our church and the ſmaller. Many, who are not wanting in an humble, if not ſervile reſpect, to the elders that ſurround the commiſſioner's throne in the aſſembly houſe, make it their buſineſs to throw all the blame of the confuſion that attends the ſettlement of any pariſh, upon the elders of lower rank, whom I may call, in alluſion to the ſimilitude of Free-maſons, the operative members of the ſame ſociety. It is time, therefore, for us to ſpeak for ourſelves, and particularly to thoſe from whom, becauſe of our relation to them, of which I again boaſt, we may confidently expect a fair and impartial hearing.

One other ground of encouragement I have in my preſent representation, viz. that many or moſt of our honourable elders are bred to the law. Now I find in the hiſtory of the goſpel, that it was a lawyer that took care of the body of our bleſſed Saviour, after it was crucified at the inſtigation of the prieſts. This is a paſſage recorded by all the four evangelists, and I hope one effect of its having a place in the Bible, will be the ſtirring up ſuch of our lawyers as have a ſhare in the management of public affairs, to reſcue the church, which is Chriſt's

myſtical body, from the tyrannical impositions of churchmen in power.

I have been conſidering with myſelf, whether I ought not to endeavour to raiſe my ſtyle a little when ſpeaking to your honours, above what was either neceſſary or proper when ſpeaking to thoſe of a lower rank and weaker capacity. But, upon mature deliberation, I am reſolved to continue in my old plain way, becauſe it is probable I ſhall acquit myſelf better in that than in any other. I have often obſerved, that when a countryman is called upon buſineſs to ſpeak to thoſe of high rank, if he behaves in a quiet way, makes as few motions as poſſible, and ſpeaks with ſimplicity, he paſſes very well; but if he begins to ſcrape with his right foot, and to imitate the manners of his betters, he expoſes himſelf to their deriſion. Should it happen that ſuch a man, upon his going out, hears a great loud laugh in the company he hath left, it is my opinion he ought to conclude they are making a jeſt of his ridiculous behaviour; and if he were permitted to return back, it is probable he would find one or two in the middle of the room mimicking his geſtures for the entertainment of the reſt; for there is not a more refined pleaſure to thoſe in high life, eſpecially the ladies, that apeing and deriding the manners of their inferiors. Nay, the ſame diſpoſition is to be found in all ranks, towards ſuch as are below them. Even we tradesmen and merchants have learned to ſpeak with contempt of a low-lived fellow, by which we mean one in lower life than our own. This hath determined me, as I ſaid, to aim at nothing but plainneſs of ſpeaking; and it is

very possible it may happen in this, as in my former treatise, that to some I shall be found more plain than pleasant.

The first point I am to apply to you upon, to which I humbly intreat your serious attention, is the manner of making settlements of ministers in the several parishes throughout this church. It is not unknown to you, that this thing hath caused a great deal of confusion in several corners of the country; that a great part of the people have, on that very account, separated from the established church; and many more have fallen into an indifference about religion, and given over attendance upon public instruction altogether. Now there are some things upon this subject that I must needs take for granted, because I cannot find any thing more evidently true than they are in themselves, by which I might prove them; such as, that the instruction of a nation in religion is a matter of very great importance, and that you all believe it to be so; that there is no ground to hope that people will receive benefit by the instructions of those whom they hate and abhor; and that it is impossible they can receive benefit from those instructions which they will not hear. There is one thing more, which to me appears as evident as any of them, that no compulsion ought to be used to constrain mens' choice in matters of religion. From these I think it plainly follows, that violent settlements, that is to say, giving a man a stipend, with a charge to instruct and govern the people within a certain district, the whole of which people do absolutely refuse to subject themselves to his ministry, are, to say the least, absolutely unpro-

stable, and the money that is bestowed upon the person so settled, is wholly thrown away.

There are not a few in whose hearing if I should express myself as above, they would immediately reply, All this is very true, and we are sorry for it; but as the law now stands with regard to patronages, how can it be helped? Now, though I am far from being of these gentlemen's opinions, that this matter might not be made much better, even as the law now stands, if the church were so disposed as I hope shortly to shew, yet I will suppose it for a little, and make a few reflections upon the conduct of many in that supposed situation.

And, first, they must forgive me if I say that I can by no means believe the hardship of the law of patronage lies very heavy upon their spirits, or at least if it does, they support themselves under it with surprising firmness, and discover not the least outward sign of uneasiness. Are they ever heard to complain of it, unless in a constrained manner, when others mention it before them? Do they not shew all willingness to appoint such settlements, to enforce them, to defend them? Do they in the least discountenance such probationers as accept of preferments unconditionally, although it cannot be pretended that the law obliges any man to this? On the contrary, are not these the men whom they love and delight in, whose characters they celebrate for knowledge and understanding, and for disinterested virtue?

I do confess then I am apt to doubt the sincerity of those gentlemen, when they profess their sorrow for the hardships they are under by the patronage

act ; because some apparent tokens of their concern might have been expected, and are no where to be seen. But, alas ! why am I expressing my suspicions of what is our situation ? Things are changing so fast, that it is impossible to write even such a book as this with propriety, and suited to the times ; for even since I wrote the above paragraph, I have received information from Edinburgh, which, if it had come before it was written, would have prevented the writing of it ; and even, if not for mangling my own book, I would yet expunge it. I am assured, that last May it was openly professed by some in the Assembly, that presentures were, of all others, the best way of settling preachers ; and that it was the *proto pseidon* of men of my principles to imagine otherwise. This *proto pseidon* is a phrase which I do not understand, and therefore must let it alone. It may be a phrase of some of the learned languages, and it may be of no language at all. However I have recorded it with great fidelity, as I am informed the gentleman pronounced it. And whatever is its particular signification, I suppose its general meaning is, that patronages are no grievance but a blessing. As therefore it is probable, that your lordships and honours have this many times affirmed to you, it is necessary that I should first attempt to prove what I thought had been self-evident, that we are in a bad situation, before I crave your assistance for our relief. — — — — —

S P E E C H

IN THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

ON THE

TRANSPORTATION OF DR C.——.

MODERATOR,

AS it is usual for people to differ almost upon every subject, I am not surpris'd that there should be some in this Assembly, who are for appointing that this transportation shall take place; but I apprehend it is really ground of surpris'e to see the way in which they urge their opinion. They do not speak as if they were weighing and deliberating upon the cause, that they might be able to give a just determination; they do not speak as if clearly satisfis'd themselves, or as if they desired to convince others, and bring them over to their own

opinion; but they speak in an overbearing manner, and press the conclusion with a visible displeasure at the time spent upon it, and impatience that any body should differ from or contradict them. But as positiveness is seldom any strong presumption of a good cause, so I think it is very much misplaced here; and as the quiet and comfort of a large parish immediately, and the whole country-side more remotely, depends upon our decision, I hope the assembly will not give it till after mature deliberation, and with real impartiality.

The first thing, no doubt, to be considered is, whether the commission have exceeded their powers, that we may see whether we have room at all for the other question, about the expediency of this transportation; and after reading the words of the assembly's remit, I cannot help being of opinion, with the great majority of the members of presbytery, that the commission had no power to determine this cause. Is it not plain that this is not the cause which was before the last assembly? and is it not confessed on all hands, that the commission had no title to take in any causes but such as were remitted to them? Is it not plain, that the words in any after question relating to this settlement, are not to be found in it? It is also proper to observe, from the almost constant use of these words in the remits of the assembly, that they do not suppose that a question relating to the same settlement with another, makes it the same cause. The answer made to this is, that it was a mistake or omission in the clerk of the assembly. Admitting, Sir, that this had been the case, it would be extremely wrong and

dangerous to approve the commission in paying no regard to that legal defect, but taking in the cause. For the assembly itself to make free with, and despise established forms of procedure, is of the very worst consequence. I have heard some honourable members, eminently skilled in the law, affirm, that for a court to despise even its own forms, is to make way for the admission of many instances of great and real injustice. But for the commission, which is a delegated court, so far to come over form as to take in a cause not remitted to them, is a bold transgression with a witness; and, if allowed, must be attended with consequences which it is impossible to foresee, but can scarce be imagined worse than they really will be in effect.

But, Sir, why should any say this was either an omission in the clerks, or an oversight in the last assembly? I am sure, for my part, I think they would have done wrong had they done it in any other way. What is the reason of this clause, (or any after question), when it is inserted? It is after the part of the cause is decided, to prevent contentious people to protract a settlement by foolish and frivolous appeals upon every little interlocutor or resolution of a presbytery in carrying it into execution. But in this case, neither all the parties, nor the principal part of the cause itself, was before the assembly at all; and I dare say, we may all remember to have heard it given as the opinion of the most judicious members of this church, that it is a very wrong measure to refer any cause of moment to the commission, that hath not been in a good measure

heard and understood by the assembly itself. Moderator, I beg leave further to say, that I hope this assembly will not authorise the commission in making a long arm, to take in causes without sufficient powers, because the commission is certainly the most unhappily constituted court of any in this church. I say this without intending, and I hope without giving offence to any body; for, supposing human nature in us to be just what it is in other people, the members of the commission being so numerous, and spread over all Scotland, few of them attend voluntarily, and it is the easiest thing in the world for interested persons to bring up a number of a particular way of thinking, and they may carry any cause whatever.

Thus, Sir, it appears, that the sentence of the commission has plainly exceeded their powers in some measure, even by the confession of the friends of this transportation. Let us consider it a little in itself, and see if it is like to be so great a benefit, or so great an honour to this church, as that we should either forgive the commission the encroachment they have been guilty of, or should now do ourselves what they have formerly done in a precipitate and irregular manner. Upon this branch of the subject I am very much at a loss, not what to say, if every thing were to be brought out that might be urged against it, but to bring the argument within some compass, and chiefly in lead to discover some hope of success, by reasoning from some common principles on which we had generally agree.

Moderator, I take this opportunity of declaring before this assembly, that I have always had the

deepest sense of the dishonour and loss of authority which this church has suffered, and what indeed is infinitely more, the injury which the souls of men have suffered, by many settlements in which we have ordained a pastor without a people; at the same time, I am sensible that many worthy men and faithful ministers look upon themselves as under a necessity in some such cases from the law of patronage; and I am afraid many, from a habit of doing this where there is necessity, are unwilling to come out of the same tract, and continue to do it when there is no necessity at all.

Moderator, I desire it may be observed, that I do not believe, and I know nobody so foolish as to believe what is commonly imputed to us, that any Christian, as such, has a right to call a minister on an establishment. We know that nobody has any right to call a minister on an establishment, excepting those to whom the law gives it; neither would I contend that every man ought to have a right, though we had it in our power, to make laws upon that subject, since this seeming equality would be a vile inequality. But, Sir, I would chuse to form my judgment upon a few principles, in which, I should think, hardly any in this assembly would disagree. Has not every man a natural right, well secured to him in this happy island, to judge for himself in matters of religion, and in fact to adhere to any minister he pleases? Is not the legal stipend intended to provide a sufficient and useful pastor to the people within the bounds of a certain parish? Can he be of much service to them, if he be upon ill terms with them? or can he do them any at all

if they will not hear him? Does any body desire to compel them by penal or ecclesiastical laws to hear him? or would such forced religion be of any worth? Is not then the legal encouragement unhappily lost and misapplied by somebody's fault, when a minister is settled to whom nobody will adhere? Now, Sir, the inference that I would draw from these principles is no more than this, that decency, and our indispensable duty as a church court, requires us to make no such settlements but with regret, and never without a real necessity; and the cause we have now before us, is one in which no such necessity exists. It is a transportation, Sir, the expediency of which we are to judge of, and the person concerned is not only bound in duty, but can be easily compelled by law, to submit to our decision. The great argument that always has been used against this or the like reasoning, has been brought out in this cause, that the people were unreasonable and prejudiced, and have been stirred up by evil-minded persons. This argument, Sir, is so old and stale, that I am surprised people are not ashamed of it, and that the ingenuity of the lawyers has not been able to invent another that shall have the advantage of being new. How often have we heard from this bar, this parish would have been agreeably and peaceably settled, but very early a combination was formed—this is all in all, the rest follows of course. I am persuaded, Sir, from the certain knowledge of many particular instances in which this was alleged, that in nine cases of ten the allegation is false. One person in a parish or country side may be active, and it may be said with plausibility, that he is the main

spring of the opposition. Sir, it is very easy to lead a people according to their own inclinations; but it is not so easy as many seem to suppose, to change their inclinations and direct their choice. In the mean time, it is always forgotten that the argument is founded, not upon the cause or occasion, but upon the reality of the aversion of the people to the minister.

Moderator, an argument that is made use of to persuade us to order this transportation is, that if it should be refused, it would encourage the people to resist in other cases. I am afraid, Sir, that the tame submission which indeed is fast approaching, and which many seem so ardently to desire, can never take place, till there is a total indifference about religion among all the members of the established church: take our neighbour country of England as an example of that desirable peace. But if this argument be laid as it ought to be, that people should not be headstrong and unreasonable, it operates plainly the contrary way; for there is nothing whatever that would give us so much weight and influence with the people, as that we shew a proper tenderness to them, as we have opportunity. If we do not oppress them when we have it in our power to relieve them, we may expect to have some influence over them, when we are straitened and distressed ourselves.

Besides, Sir, on this subject of the prejudices of the people, this pretence is carried a most unreasonable and extravagant length, and nothing but the prejudice in themselves could make men speak in

such a style. Many will needs have it to be prejudice, and groundless prejudice in a people, if they do not fall in with a man to be their minister, against whose life and doctrine they cannot bring any legal objection. Alas, Sir, all such things are matters of election and choice, and not of legal proof. In illustration of the people's case, there is a very good example given, that a man would have just cause of complaint, if you should force a physician upon him of whose skill he had no opinion, though he could not prove him insufficient before the faculty.

But, Sir, as it would be wrong to attribute opposition to a minister's settlement in all cases to groundless prejudice, I am sorry to say it, but I am obliged in justice to say it, we have very little reason to do so in the present case. Even in the case of a probationer, when he absolutely adheres to a presentation, notwithstanding the greatest opposition from the people, it is but a sorry mark of love to souls, and of that self-denial which every Christian should continually maintain. Many things, however, may be said in favour of a probationer; yet, Sir, for a settled minister not only to act this part, but to excel all that ever were before him, in a bold and insolent contempt of the people, as plainly appears to be Dr C——'s case, is such a conduct, that I shall have a worse opinion of this assembly than I have at present, if they do not openly express their indignation at such indecency of behaviour. In the history of the church we find no character more odious, or more unclerical, if I may speak so, than

ambition and open solicitation of ecclesiastical preferment. Little changes in forms, Sir, do often produce at last great changes in manners and characters. In former times, in our church, the probationer or minister himself was never considered as a party, but was considered as the subject concerning which that process was carried on by the callers or referees; but now they have been for some time past considered as parties—they begin to allow the cause to appear at the bar—to urge their claim—to consider the people who are to be their charge as their adversaries, and to treat them with contempt and disdain.

I confess, Sir, I am not able to imagine what are the views of a minister who acts in this manner. It is not, I fear, easy to answer, that he resolves to change his situation and take upon him that office, from sincere regard to the glory of God and love to souls, which he must profess at his admission. But as we must be tender and cautious in judging of the inward motives of others, I shall leave that to Him who judgeth the secrets of all hearts; but in the mean time, every one in this house is now called to judge, whether it would be for the glory of God and the good of mankind, to suffer him to execute his intention. Let it be considered with seriousness. Moderator, it is not only the people of the parish, or those of lower rank, but many of all stations whom we shall offend, in the proper sense of the word, if we order this settlement. They are led by such things to treat, and they often do treat with derision, a minister's

concern for his usefulness, and affirm that it is no more than a desire of a comfortable benefice and salary for life. I shall be sorry to see the day, when by resembling them in their practice, we shall learn from England to leave the people and the work altogether out of the act, and so call our charges no more *parishes* but *livings*.

L E T T E R

SENT TO

S C O T L A N D,

FOR THE

SCOTS MAGAZINE.

I AM informed by my correspondents in Scotland, that several letters have been published in the newspapers there, containing the most virulent reflections upon me, on account of an advertisement by J— P—, merchant in Glasgow, relating to the settlement of a tract of land in Nova Scotia, in which he mentions my being concerned. One or two of these papers have been sent me, and contain so many mistakes in point of fact, as well as betray such ignorance of the subject they attempt to treat, that it would be a disgrace for any man to enter into a formal quarrel with such opponents. Were I in Scotland at this time, I should think it a

very great departure from prudence, to take the least public notice of these invectives. Few persons have been less concerned than I have been, through life, to contradict false accusations, from an opinion which I formed early, and which has been confirmed by experience, that there is scarcely any thing more harmless than political or party malice. It is best to leave it to itself; opposition and contradiction are the only means of giving it life and duration.

But as I am now at so great a distance, and the subject of the scandal is what passes in America, so that impartial persons in general may be less able to judge of the probability of facts, and cannot have proper opportunities of making a complete inquiry, I think it necessary to state this matter with all the perspicuity and brevity of which I am capable. The accusation, I think, may be reduced to the following argument—Migrations from Britain to America, are not only hurtful, but tend to the ruin of that kingdom; therefore J. W. by inviting people to leave Scotland and settle in America, is an enemy to his country.

It will not be improper to mention in the entry, that my having any concern in such an extensive undertaking, was wholly accidental and unexpected. I was invited and pressed to it, from a motive that was not at all concealed, that it would give the people who intended to come out, greater confidence that they should meet with fair treatment. This very reason induced me to consent; and that I might the more effectually answer that purpose, one of the express conditions of my joining with the company

was, that no land should be sold dearer to any coming from Scotland than I should direct. This was the more necessary, that either through mistake, and the power of European ideas, or through misguided avarice, some advertisements had been published in the Scots newspapers, which would not appear surprising to persons born and educated in Scotland, but which are infinitely ridiculous to one acquainted with American affairs. In particular, one I cut out of a Glasgow newspaper and sent home, relating to Newfoundland, where persons were invited to go to make their fortunes, by renting each family thirty acres of land, at the easy rent of sixpence Sterling at first, and gradually rising till it came to two shillings yearly for ever. Now how absurd is this, when in many places you can buy the fee simple of land for the same or less money than is here asked for rent ! Besides, how shall thirty acres of land maintain any family, in a place where land is so cheap, and labour so dear ?

I have heard it given as a reason for these ensnaring proposals, that people in Britain will not believe that land is good for any thing, if you offer it for a few shillings per acre in fee simple. But the people in Britain should be told, that the value of land does not depend upon its quality, unless in a very small degree--it depends upon its situation, distance from other settlements, and many circumstances that need not be mentioned. It is a matter now as fully ascertained as universal uncontradicted testimony can make it, that the back land in America is in general better than that along the shore, though very different in value ; because the one is full of

trees and wild beasts, and the other is full of houses, fields, and orchards. One would think that this matter might be well enough understood by this time. When a new settlement is making, especially if one family or one company have a very large tract, they will sell it very cheap; and if they are urgent to forward the settlement, they will give it to one or two families at first for nothing at all; and their profit does not arise from the price paid by the first purchasers, but from the prospect of speedily raising the value of what remains. Any man that can think, may understand this from J— P——'s advertisement. He proposes to sell to the first families at sixpence Sterling an acre. What profit could he make of that small price? Supposing he should sell 20,000 acres, the whole produce would be but five hundred pounds, to be divided among twelve or fourteen persons. The plain fact is, that the sum is not at all equivalent to the trouble and expence of serving out the patent; therefore the profit must be future, and must arise wholly from the prosperity of the settlement. I believe it is a rule, without any exception, that a man's duty is his interest; but there is no case whatever, in which the interest of both parties is more manifestly the same, than in selling and purchasing new lands to settle upon; for the proprietors can receive no benefit, but from the success and thriving of the settlers.

New land may be bought in America at all prices, from sixpence Sterling an acre, to forty shillings; and those who would judge of the quality by the price, would do just like one who should judge that

an acre fold for a house in the city, must be twenty times better in soil than the fields at two miles distance, because it is twenty times the price. The price of land in America is rising very fast, and sometimes rises in particular places far more rapidly than could be foreseen. A gentleman who has a large tract in New York government, within these three years offered to give away for nothing several thousand acres, at the rate of two hundred acres to each family of actual settlers, and yet has given away none; but since that time has sold a great deal at four shillings and sixpence Sterling, and now will scarce sell any at that price.

Having premised the above, I would intreat the reader's attention to the following remarks:

1. There is very little ground for being alarmed at the migrations from Britain to America. The numbers who come abroad never have been, and probably never will be, of any consequence to the population of the country. Any one who will read Montefquieu will soon be satisfied, that when the spirit and principles of a constitution are good, occasional migrations, and even war, famine and pestilence, are hardly felt after a little time. The place of those who are removed is speedily filled. Two or three hundred families going abroad, makes a great noise; but it is nothing at all to the people in Great Britain, and will but make way for the settlement and provision of those who stay behind, and occasion them to marry and multiply the faster. It is probable that the people in Britain imagine, that the new settlements in America are wholly filled

by those who come from Europe. It is far otherwise; they do not make the fortieth part in any new settlement. Such tracts are peopled from the adjacent settlements at first, with a few stranger emigrants, but their chief increase is from natural generation. If a settlement is good, a few families will speedily make a colony; but if otherwise, you may send in ships full of people every year, and yet it will come to nothing. If a few passengers coming out from Britain threaten destruction to that populous country, what instant ruin must come upon the settled parts of New-England, New-York, New-Jersey, and Pennsylvania, from whence many times the number remove every year to the back countries, and yet it has not any sensible effect, either on the price of land or the number of the people, which continue to increase notwithstanding. America is certainly exhibiting at this time, a scene that is new in the history of mankind. It increases in a proportion that no political calculations have yet been able to understand, or lay down rules for. The reason of this I take to be, that when colonies were sent out in ancient times, the people and the soil were somewhat similar, and improved by slow degrees; but in America we see a wild, but a noble soil, taken possession of by all the power, wealth, and learning of Europe, which pushes on its improvement with a rapidity which is inconceivable.

Another thing ought not to be omitted: There are great numbers of people that go from America to Britain, so that the migration is not all one way. The people in New-England (an old settlement) say, that they have sent twice as many people to

England, as ever came out of it to them. But though upon the whole, while this country is but yet settling, the number coming out should be greater, yet there is this difference, that they commonly come out poor, and return rich. This is very much to the advantage of Britain, if wealth and an increased value of land be an advantage. The truth is, even as to numbers, though I do not think so many people go from America to Europe, as come from Europe to America, yet I am apt to think, that there is little difference in the number that goes to, or comes from the island of Great Britain.

2. But supposing (what I do not believe) that inviting people over from Scotland to America, did tend in some degree to depopulate that part of the world, I cannot see why a man who does so should, for that reason, be called an enemy to his country. What is it for a man to be a friend to his country? Is it to wish well to the stones and the earth, or the people that inhabit it? Can he be an enemy to them, by pointing out to such of them as are poor or oppressed, where they may have a happy and plentiful provision, and their posterity be multiplied as the sand of the sea? If he is their enemy by deceiving them, the discovery will soon be made, and the design will be detested; or rather, indeed, the discovery would have been made long ago, as the intercourse between Great Britain and America has been of so many years standing. Is he, then, the enemy of those who stay behind? Not surely of the multitude or common people, for there will be but more room made for them, and the more easy access

to a comfortable subsistence. It remains, then, that he must be the enemy of the landholders, who may run some risk of being obliged to lower their rents. But is this a liberal way of thinking, to say a man is an enemy to his country, while he promotes the happiness of the great body of the people, with a small diminution of the interest of an handful? Allowing, therefore, this argument all the force that it can pretend to, the accusation is base and scandalous, arising from a littleness of mind, incapable of cherishing a generous love of mankind. I cannot help thinking it is doing a real service to my country, when I shew that those of them who find it difficult to subsist on the soil in which they were born, may easily transport themselves to a soil and climate vastly superior to that. Sobriety and industry cannot fail to be attended by independence and abundance; neither is this a matter that can be doubted by those who reflect a little on the nature of things. A country where land is cheap, provisions in plenty, and, as a natural consequence, labour is dear, must be favourable to the industrious husbandman. His chief concern ought to be, to guard against the temptations always attendant on such a state, viz. laziness and intemperance. I will take this opportunity also to observe, that such as have a small independent fortune in Britain, if they have a taste for agriculture, might easily, in America, live upon their estates as well as those in Britain who have a yearly revenue equal to their whole stock. But this is only in case a man lives upon his land, and eats the fruit of it. If he expects that he may live idly and magnificently in a city,

and rent out his land at a high price, he will find himself miserably mistaken. It would be a strange country, indeed, if land might be bought cheap and rented dear. This is impossible; for by what arguments could you persuade a man to pay a high rent for land, when, by going a little back, he may have the property to himself for a small matter.

But, after all, I can never admit that the happiness of one class of men depends upon the misery of another; or that it can be any way contrary to the interest of the landholders in Scotland, that a few who find themselves pinched in their circumstances, or who have an active and enterprising disposition, should remove to America. There are always strong motives to hinder a man's removal from his own country, and it cannot be supposed that any considerable number will think of such a measure, unless they are really in an oppressed state. If this is the case, from the natural course of things, their removal will be no injury to any body, but like a swarm of bees coming off from a hive that is too full. If it is the case in particular places, from the iron hand of tyranny, I see no reason to offer any excuse for the meritorious act of assisting them to make their escape. Let not people confine themselves to narrow, selfish views. No part of Europe has received, or does now receive a greater accession of wealth from the American settlements, than Great Britain; and perhaps there is not part of Great Britain where the rent of land has risen higher by the same means, than Scotland. I suppose every gentleman in that part of the kingdom

is well pleased to hear that several thousand Palatines, or people from the north of Ireland, go to America every year; or that from time to time, some one or other who went abroad with a lancet in his pocket, is coming back with an opulent estate to settle in his neighbourhood; or that no wealthy American is satisfied till he has sent his son home, as they call it, to spend from two or three hundreds, to as many thousands, in order to complete his education by study, or end his life by gambling. If so, why should he grudge that some of his poorer countrymen should acquire a comfortable settlement there, though with little prospect of returning, especially as it is impossible for them to do any thing for the improvement of America, that will not in the end redound to the advantage of Great Britain?

3. I have only further to say, that the outcry made upon this subject is as impolitic as it is unjust. If I wanted to people America from Scotland, I would not think of employing a more effectual way, than exciting or hiring one or two authors, who have nothing else to do, to write against it. This would necessarily make people pay attention to the subject, and seek after the information which they would otherwise have neglected. At the same time, as human nature in general is not very fond of restraint, they would perhaps be the more disposed to remove, when they found their landlords anxious that they should stay. I desire it may be particularly observed, that I have not said in any part of the above discourse, nor do I believe that there is any hard-heartedness or disposition to oppress in the

landlords of Scotland, more than in any other country, nor more at this time than any former period. The rise of lands has been the consequence of an increase of trade and wealth, and the disposition to go abroad in the common people, at present, is owing to the same cause that made clerks and supercargoes go out for these fifty years past, viz. the hope of bettering their circumstances. It is both unjust and impossible to hinder them, if they be so minded; and, for the reasons given above, I am persuaded it will not be the least injury to those of any rank whom they leave behind. For my own part, my interest in the matter is not great; but since Providence has sent me to this part of the world, and since so much honour has been done me, as to suppose that my character might be some security against fraud and imposition, I shall certainly look upon it as my duty, to do every real service in my power to such of my countrymen as shall fall in my way, and shall either desire or seem to need my assistance.

J. W.

IGNORANCE OF THE BRITISH

WITH RESPECT TO

A M E R I C A.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SCOTS MAGAZINE.

SIR,

Philadelphia, May 28. 1771

I SAW in your Magazine (Appendix 1770) a letter, signed E. R. containing some remarks upon, and a severe condemnation of Dr Lathrop's sermon at Boston, entitled, "Innocent Blood crying for Vengeance." These remarks are introduced with observing, that the synod of New-York and Philadelphia had written a letter, and claimed relation to the church of Scotland; and then says the author, 'on reading of which I could not help thinking, if we may judge of the American church from the sample here given, that our church derives no great honour from her western progeny; but I hope the flock is better than the sample.'

Now, Sir, as to this author's observations on Dr Lathrop's sermon, I shall say little—because, perhaps, it cannot be wholly justified; yet, if all circumstances are duly attended to, there is as little reason to insult or glory over the people of Boston, as there was to excite the public resentment against Captain P——. But what I have only in view, is shortly to expose the excessive absurdity and ignorance of bringing in the synod of New-York and Philadelphia on this occasion. Were the author of this sermon even a member of the synod, or any way connected with it, the attempt would be impertinent; because no church can be supposed answerable for the prudence of every particular person connected with her, especially the wisdom or propriety of their publications. Does the church of Scotland desire to be judged by this rule? I suppose not. Nor will I be guilty of so much injustice, as to judge of her by this her friend and advocate. 'I hope,' as he says, 'the stock is better than the sample;' for,

How astonishing must be the ignorance of that gentleman concerning the British dominions in America, when he supposes the ministers of Boston to be a part of the synod of New-York and Philadelphia! Did the synod's letter say any such thing? Did it not enumerate the provinces in which their members reside? Did it not inform the Public, that it is but seventy years since the first presbytery met in this country? But give me leave to inform your correspondent, that it is about one hundred and forty years since the people of New-England established a college at Cambridge near Boston; that their

churches are upon the independent plan, and are, in the four New-England provinces, above five hundred in number; whereas the whole synod of New-York and Philadelphia contained, when their letter was written, but one hundred and twenty-seven members, and does not now amount to one hundred and fifty.

I do not mean by this to disclaim connection with the churches of New-England. They are a most respectable part of the church of Christ. Nor do I think that any part of the British empire is at this day equal to them for real religion and sound morals. My single purpose is to teach your correspondent, and your readers in general, not to write upon American affairs unless they understand them. I tell you nothing but truth when I say, that being a Briton, I have often blushed in company to hear stories narrated of the absurd and ignorant manner in which persons of no inconsiderable stations in Britain have talked of things and places in America. We have heard of a gentleman in the House of Commons frequently making mention of the *island* of Pennsylvania; and of another who, in the Privy Council, insisted, after contradiction, on his being right in his description of the *island* of New-Jersey.

But what exceeds every thing is the following story, which I have been assured by persons well acquainted with it, was a fact.—Some years ago a frigate came from England, with dispatches for many, or most of the governors of provinces in North America. The captain had orders to go first to New York, and from thence to proceed to

Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys. When he arrived at New York, he delivered his dispatches there, and mentioned his orders. The governor told him, if you will give me the letters for the governors of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, I will undertake to have them delivered in forty-eight hours, but if you take the rout prescribed to you, perhaps they will not receive them in three months. To which the captain replied, I do not care a farthing about the matter; I will stick to my instructions.

I am, Sir, your most obedient,

humble servant,

N. Y.

A D D R E S S

TO THE

INHABITANTS OF JAMAICA,
and other West-India Islands,

IN BEHALF OF THE

COLLEGE OF NEW-JERSEY.

GENTLEMEN,

IT is unnecessary to begin this address by a laboured encomium on learning in general, or the importance of public seminaries for the instruction of youth. Their use in every country, their necessity in a new or rising country, and particularly the influence of science in giving a proper direction and full force to industry or enterprize, are indeed so manifest, that they are either admitted by all, or the exceptions are so few as to be wholly unworthy of regard.

In a more private view, the importance of education is little less evident. It promotes virtue and

happiness, as well as arts and industry. On this, as on the former, it is unnecessary to enlarge; only suffer me to make a remark, not quite so common, that, if there is any just comparison on this subject, the children of persons in the higher ranks of life, and especially of those who by their own activity and diligence rise to opulence, have, of all others, the greatest need of an early, prudent, and well conducted education. The wealth to which they are born, becomes often a dangerous temptation, and the station in which they enter upon life requires such duties, as those of the finest talents can scarcely be supposed capable of, unless they have been improved and cultivated with the utmost care. Experience shews the use of a liberal education in both these views. It is generally a preservative from vices of a certain class, by giving easy access to more refined pleasures, and inspiring the mind with an abhorrence of low riot, and contempt for brutal conversation. It is also of acknowledged necessity to those who do not wish to live for themselves alone, but would apply their talents to the service of the Public and the good of mankind. Education is therefore of equal importance, in order either to enjoy life with dignity and elegance, or employ it to the benefit of society in offices of power or trust.

But leaving these general topics, or rather, taking it for granted that every thing of this kind is by intelligent persons, especially parents, both believed and felt, I proceed to inform the public, that it is intended to solicit benefactions from the wealthy

and generous, in behalf of a College of considerable standing, founded at Nassau-Hall, in Princeton, New-Jersey. In order to this it is necessary for me, 1. To shew the great advantage it will be to the inhabitants of the West Indies, to have it in their power to send their children to approved places of education on the continent of America, instead of being obliged to send them over, for the very elements of science, to South or North Britain. 2. To point out the situation and advantages of the College of New-Jersey in particular. And as I was never a lover either of florid discourses or ostentatious promises, I shall endeavour to handle these two points with all possible simplicity, and with that reserve and decency which are so necessary, where comparison in some respects cannot be avoided.

On the first of these points let it be observed,

That places of education on the continent of America are much nearer to the West Indies than those in Great Britain, and yet sufficiently distant to remove the temptation of running home and lurking in idleness. This is a circumstance which, other things being supposed equal, is by no means inconsiderable. Parents may hear much oftener from and of their children, and may even visit them, as is known to have been the case here, with no great loss of time for business, and to the advantage of their own health. They may also much more speedily and certainly be informed, whether they are profiting and have justice done them or not, and remove or continue them at pleasure. The distance indeed is, if I mistake not, well proportioned in all respects. It is such as to allow of the advantages

just now mentioned, and yet so great as to favour the behaviour and instruction of the youth. I have observed, in the course of four years experience, that those who came from the greatest distance have, in general, behaved with most regularity. Being removed from their relations, it becomes necessary for them to support a character, as they find themselves treated by their companions, teachers, and indeed all other persons, according to their behaviour. This is so true, that if parents are obliged to place their children out of their own families, an hundred miles distance is better than twenty, and so of every other proportion, till we come to the hurtful extreme.

Let it be further observed, that the climate of the continent of North America is certainly much more healthy in itself, and probably also more suited to the constitutions of those who have been born in the West Indies, than that of Great Britain. Health is the foundation of every earthly blessing, and absolutely necessary, both to the receiving instruction in youth, and being able in riper years to apply it to its proper use. Parental tenderness will make every one feel the importance of this to his own children. And whether the observation itself is just or not, I leave to be decided by the judgment of all who have been in both countries, and the information they will readily give to those who have not.

Having touched on these circumstances, let us try to make the comparison as to the substance of the education itself. Here, I am sensible, it behoves me to write with the utmost circumspection, to avoid giving offence, and that to some this will appear,

at first sight, altogether impossible. I am, however, not without the greatest hopes, that I shall be able fully to prove the proposition I have laid down, without giving any just ground of offence to persons of reflection and candour. No man can have a higher opinion of, and not many have a more thorough acquaintance with the means of education at present in Great Britain, than the author of this address, who was born in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, educated in it, and spent the greatest part of his after-life in constant intercourse and great intimacy with the members of the university of Glasgow. He therefore says it, both with pleasure and gratitude, that any young gentleman who is strictly sober in his behaviour, and who applies with steadiness and diligence, has all possible advantages, particularly in North Britain, with which he is best acquainted, for improving himself in classic literature, in every branch of science, and especially in the justly valued knowledge of the force and propriety of the English language, and in true taste; including all that is usually comprehended under the general expression of the *Belles Lettres*. Nay, further, he admits and affirms, that any gentleman of fortune, who would give the last and highest polish to the education of a young man of promising parts, would do well to send him, after his principles are fixed, and his judgment a little matured, for a year or two, to some of the universities of Great Britain. But notwithstanding these concessions, if they may be so called, it is hoped it will appear, that it would be much more to the advantage of the gentlemen of the West Indies, to give

their children their grammar-school and college education, at least to their first degree in the arts, in an American seminary, if conducted by persons of ability and integrity, than to send them to Great Britain; and that for two important reasons: first, the better to secure their instruction; and, secondly, for the preservation of their morals.

1. For the greater security of their instruction. The colleges in Britain have by no means that forcible motive that we have, not only to teach those who are willing to learn, but to see that every one be obliged to study, and actually learn, in proportion to his capacity. These old foundations have stood so many ages, have had their character so long established, and are indeed so well known to be filled with men of the greatest ability, that they do not so much as feel any injury, in point of reputation, from one or more coming out of college almost as ignorant as they went in. The truth is, I do not think they ought to lose any character by it. Every one knows, that it is owing to the idleness or profligacy of the boy, and not the insufficiency of the master. When the numbers of one class are from an hundred to an hundred and thirty, or perhaps more, and when they do not live in college, how is it possible the master can keep them to their private studies, or even with any certainty discern whether they study diligently or not. A good professor is easily and speedily distinguished by his own performances, by the esteem, attachment, and progress of the diligent, but very little, if at all, hurt by the ignorance of the negligent. I write these

things to vast numbers who know them as well as I do; and I could easily produce gentlemen in America, who have freely and generously confessed themselves to be unhappy proofs of their truth. Let not any body say I reflect upon the teachers for not using discipline to oblige them to apply. The numbers are so great, that to try and judge every neglect would take more time than they have for their whole work. To this may be added, that it may very often happen that the persons to whose charge boys in early life are sent from the West Indies, either are not themselves judges, or, from their situation and business, have few opportunities of knowing whether they profit or not.

On the other hand, the young seminaries in America have their character constantly at stake for their diligence, as one or two untaught coming out from us, affects us in the most sensible manner. As to the college of New-Jersey in particular, we have seen the importance of this in so strong a light, that whereas before we had half-yearly, we now have quarterly examinations, carried on with the utmost strictness, when all who are found deficient are degraded to the inferior class. So impartially have these trials been conducted, that nothing is more usual than for those who suspect themselves, especially if their relations are near, to pretend sickness and avoid the examination, that they may afterwards fall back without the dishonour of a sentence. Further, all the scholars with us, as soon as they put on the gown, are obliged to lodge in college, and must of necessity be in their chamber in study hours; nor is it in the least difficult to discover, whether

they apply carefully or not. The teachers also live in college, so that they have every possible advantage, not only for assisting the diligent, but stimulating the slothful.

2. The second reason for preferring an American education is, that their morals may be more effectually preserved. This, by all virtuous and judicious parents, will be held a point of the last consequence. The danger they run of contracting vicious habits by being sent to Britain, has been often complained of, and therefore, I suppose, is matter of experience. If so, it will not be difficult to assign the causes of it, which may be safely mentioned, because they carry no imputation upon the schools or colleges to which they are sent. They generally are, and are always supposed to be of great wealth. The very name of a West Indian has come to imply in it great opulence. Now it is well known that, in all the great towns in Britain, a set of profligate boys, and sometimes artful persons farther advanced in life, attach themselves to such as are well supplied with money, impose upon their youth and simplicity, gratify them in every irregular desire, and lead them both into idleness and vice. There are also, in every considerable place in Great Britain, but especially the principal cities where the colleges are fixed, a constant succession and variety of intoxicating diversions, such as balls, concerts, plays, races, and others. These, whatever may be pleaded for some of them, in a certain measure, for those further advanced, every body must acknowledge are highly pernicious to youth in the first stages of their education. The temptation becomes

so much the stronger, and indeed almost irresistible, when an acquaintance with these things is considered as fashionable life, and necessary to the accomplishment of a man of breeding. Is it to be supposed that young persons of great fortune, when they can be immediate partakers, will wait with patience for the proper time when they may be permitted to view with caution such scenes of dissipation? On the contrary, it may be expected that they will give into them with all the impetuosity and rashness of youth; and, when their parents expect them to return well stored with classic learning and philosophy, they may find them only well acquainted with the laws of the turf or gaming table, and expert in the use of the reigning phrases of those honourable arts.

What provision is made for preserving and improving the morals of the scholars with us, I leave till I come to speak of the constitution and situation of the college of New-Jersey. But before I dismiss this part of the subject, I must just repeat, that the two reasons I have given against a British education do, and were intended only to conclude against sending boys in early life. At that time they are incapable of reaping the advantages chiefly to be valued in a British education. These are, not only hearing and being able to judge of the public performances of men of letters, in the pulpit, at the bar, and in parliament, but being introduced to the acquaintance, and enjoying the conversation of men of eminence. This is a favour that would not be granted to boys, and, if granted, could be of no service, but contributes, in the highest degree, to the delight

and instruction of those of riper years. Experience seems greatly to confirm this, for, as many boys have left some of the best schools in Britain with little classic knowledge, though supported at great expence, so those who received their first education in this country, and went home to finish it, have seldom returned without great and real improvement.

In addition to these arguments in behalf of American colleges, drawn from the instruction and morals of the youth who are sent to them, I cannot help mentioning one other which must have great weight in a view somewhat different. These colleges must necessarily, in time, produce a number of young men proper to undertake the office of private tutors in gentlemens' families. There are some who prefer a private to a public education at any rate, especially in the very first stages, and some find it necessary, as not being able to support the expence of sending their children so early, and keeping them so long from home. Now all who know the situation of things in Britain, must be sensible how difficult it is to get young men of capacity or expectation to leave their native country in order to undertake the instruction of gentlemens children. In this office there is little prospect of increase of fortune, to balance the risk of going to a new and dangerous, or supposed dangerous climate. But those who are born and educated in America will not only increase the number of such teachers, but they will have no such hideous apprehensions of going to any part of the continent or islands. Whatever is done, therefore, to raise and support proper

feminaries in America, will, in time, be followed by this great and general benefit, which I have been assured is very much needed in many or most of the West India islands.

I will now proceed to speak a little of the constitution and advantages of the college of New-Jersey in particular.

About twenty-four years ago, several gentlemen and ministers in this province, by the friendship and patronage of Jonathan Belcher, Esq. then Governor, obtained a very ample royal charter, incorporating them under the title of Trustees of the College of New-Jersey; and giving them the same privileges and powers that are given to the 'two English Universities, or any other University or College in Great Britain.' They, although only possessed of a naked charter, without any public encouragement, immediately began the institution, and very soon after, by their own activity and zeal, and the benevolence of others who had the highest opinion of their integrity, raised a noble building, called Nassau-Hall, at Princeton, New-Jersey. This they chose to do, though it wasted their capital, as their great intention was to make effectual provision, not only for the careful instruction, but for the regular government of the youth. There all the scholars are lodged, and also boarded, except when they have express license to board out, in the president's house or elsewhere.

The regular course of instruction is in four classes, exactly after the manner, and bearing the names of the classes in the English universities: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior. In the first year

they read Latin and Greek, with the Roman and Grecian antiquities, and rhetoric. In the second, continuing the study of the languages, they learn a complete system of geography, with the use of the globes, the first principles of philosophy, and the elements of mathematical knowledge. The third, though the languages are not wholly omitted, is chiefly employed in mathematics and natural philosophy. And the senior year is employed in reading the higher classics, proceeding in the mathematics and natural philosophy, and going through a course of moral philosophy. In addition to these, the President gives lectures to the juniors and seniors, which consequently every student hears twice over in his course, first upon chronology and history, and afterwards upon composition and criticism. He has also taught the French language last winter, and it will continue to be taught to those who desire to learn it.

During the whole course of their studies, the three younger classes, two every evening formerly, and now three, because of their increased number, pronounce an oration on a stage erected for that purpose in the hall, immediately after prayers, that they may learn, by early habit, presence of mind, and proper pronunciation and gesture in public speaking. This excellent practice, which has been kept up almost from the first foundation of the college, has had the most admirable effects. The senior scholars, every five or six weeks, pronounce orations of their own composition, to which all persons of any note in the neighbourhood are invited or admitted.

The college is now furnished with all the most important helps to instruction. The library contains a very large collection of valuable books. The lessons of astronomy are given upon the orrery lately invented and constructed by David Rittenhouse, Esq. which is reckoned, by the best judges, the most excellent in its kind of any ever yet produced; and when what is commissioned, and now upon its way, is added to what the college already possesses, the apparatus for mathematics and natural philosophy will be equal, if not superior, to any on the continent.

As we have never yet been obliged to omit or alter it for want of scholars, there is a fixed annual commencement on the last Wednesday of September, when, after a variety of public exercises, always attended by a vast concourse of the politest company from the different parts of this province, and the cities of New York and Philadelphia, the students whose senior year is expiring, are admitted to the degree of Bachelors of Arts; the Bachelors of three years standing, to the degrees of Masters; and such other higher degrees granted, as are either regularly claimed, or the Trustees think fit to bestow upon those who have distinguished themselves by their literary productions, or their appearances in public life.

On the day preceding the commencement last year, there was, and it will be continued every year hereafter, a public exhibition, and voluntary contention for prizes, open for every member of college. These were first, second, and third prizes, on each of the following subjects:—1. Reading the

English language with propriety and grace, and being able to answer all questions on its orthography and grammar. 2. Reading the Latin and Greek languages in the same manner, with particular attention to true quantity. 3. Speaking Latin. 4. Latin versions. 5. Pronouncing English orations. The preference was determined by ballot, and all present permitted to vote, who were graduates of this or any other college.

As to the government of the college, no correction by stripes is permitted. Such as cannot be governed by reason, and the principles of honour and shame, are reckoned unfit for residence in a college. The collegiate censures are: 1. Private admonition by the president, professor, or tutor. 2. Before the faculty. 3. Before the whole class to which the offender belongs. 4. And the last and highest, before all the members of college assembled in the hall. And, to preserve the weight and dignity of these censures, it has been an established practice, that the last or highest censure, viz. public admonition, shall never be repeated upon the same person. If it has been thought necessary to inflict it upon any one, and if this does not preserve him from falling into such gross irregularities a second time, it is understood that expulsion is immediately to follow.

Through the narrowness of the funds, the government and instruction has hitherto been carried on by a president and three tutors. At last commencement, the trustees chose a professor of mathematics; and intend, as their funds are raised, to

have a greater number of professorships, and carry their plan to as great perfection as possible.

The above relates wholly to what is properly the college; but there is also at the same place, established under the particular direction and patronage of the president, a grammar-school, where boys are instructed in the Latin and Greek languages with the utmost care, and on the plan of the most approved teachers in Great Britain. It is now so large as to have two masters for the languages, and one for writing and arithmetic; and as some are sent with a design only to learn the Latin, Greek, and French languages, arithmetic, geography, and the practical branches of the mathematics, without going through a full college course, such scholars are permitted to attend the instruction of the classes in whatever coincides with their plan. It is also now resolved, at the request of several gentlemen, to have an English master after next vacation, for teaching the English language regularly and grammatically, and for perfecting by English exercises those whose previous instruction may have been defective or erroneous.

I have thus laid before the Public a concise account of the constitution of the college of New-Jersey, and must now earnestly recommend it to the assistance and patronage of men of liberal and ingenuous minds. I am sensible that nothing is more difficult, than to write in behalf of what the writer himself has so great a part in conducting, so as neither to fail in doing justice to the subject, nor exceed in improper or arrogant professions. And yet to employ others to write for us, who may have

some pretence, as indifferent persons, to embellish our characters, is liable to still greater suspicion. The very best security one can give to the Public for decency and truth, is to write openly in his own person, that he may be under a necessity to answer for it, if it is liable to challenge.

This is the method I have determined to follow; and that I may neither offend the delicacy of my friends, nor provoke the resentment of my enemies, I will endeavour humbly to recommend this college to the attention and esteem of men of penetration and candour, chiefly from such circumstances as have little or no relation to the personal characters of those now employed, but are essential to its situation and constitution, and therefore must be supposed to have not only the most powerful, but the most lasting effect. The circumstances to which I would intreat the attention of impartial persons, are the following.

1. The college of New-Jersey is altogether independent. It hath received no favour from government but the charter, by the particular friendship of a person now deceased. It owes nothing but to the benefactions of a Public so diffusive, that it cannot produce particular dependence, or operate by partial influence. From this circumstance it must be free from two great evils, and derive the like number of solid advantages. There is no fear of being obliged to chuse teachers upon ministerial recommendation, or in compliance with the overbearing weight of family interest. On the contrary, the trustees are naturally led, and in a manner forced, to found their choice upon the characters of

the persons, and the hope of public approbation. At the same time, those concerned in the instruction and government of the college, are as far removed as the state of human nature will admit, from any temptation to a fawning, cringing spirit, and mean servility, in the hope of court-favour or promotion.

In consequence of this it may naturally be expected, and we find by experience, that hitherto in fact the spirit of liberty has breathed high and strong in all the members. I would not be understood to say, that a seminary of learning ought to enter deeply into political contention, far less would I meanly court favour, by professing myself a violent partisan in any present disputes. But surely a constitution which naturally tends to produce a spirit of liberty and independence, even though this should sometimes need to be reined in by prudence and moderation, is infinitely preferable to the dead and vapid state of one whose very existence depends upon the nod of those in power. Another great advantage arising from this, is the obligation we are under to recommend ourselves, by diligence and fidelity, to the Public. Having no particular prop to lean to on one side, we are obliged to stand upright and firm by leaning equally on all. We are so far from having our fund so complete as of itself to support the necessary expence, that the greater part of our annual income arises from the payments of the scholars, which we acknowledge with gratitude have been, for these several years, continually increasing.

2. This leads me to observe, that it ought to be no inconsiderable recommendation of this college to

those at a distance, that it has the esteem and approbation of those who are nearest it and know it best. The number of under-graduates, or proper members of college, is near four times that of any college on the continent to the southward of New-England, and probably greater than that of all the rest put together. This, we are at liberty to affirm, has in no degree arisen from pompous descriptions, or repeated recommendations in the public papers. We do not mean to blame the laudable attempts of others to do themselves justice. We have been often found fault with, and perhaps are to blame for neglect in this particular. It is only mentioned to give full force to the argument just now used, and the fact is certainly true. I do not remember that the name of the college of New-Jersey has been above once or twice mentioned in the newspapers for three years, except in a bare recital of the acts of the annual commencements. The present address arises from necessity, not choice; for had not a more private application been found impracticable, the press had probably never been employed.

3. It may not be amiss to observe on this subject, that the great utility of this seminary has been felt over an extensive country. Many of the clergy, episcopal and presbyterian, in the different colonies, received their education here, whose exemplary behaviour and other merit we suffer to speak for themselves. We are also willing that the Public should attend to the characters and appearance of those gentlemen in the law and medical departments, who were brought up at Nassau-Hall, and

are now in the cities of New-York and Philadelphia, and in different parts of the continent or islands. Two at least of the professors of the justly celebrated medical school lately founded in Philadelphia, and perhaps the greatest number of their pupils, received their instruction here. We are not afraid, but even wish that our claim should be decided by the conduct of those in general who have come out from us, which is one of the most conclusive arguments; for "a tree is known by its fruits." It is, at the same time, an argument of the most fair and generous kind, for it is left to be determined by mankind at their leisure, and if the appeal be not in our favour, it must be unspeakably injurious.

4. The place where the college is built is most happily chosen for the health, the studies, and the morals of the scholars. All these were particularly attended to when the spot was pitched upon. Princeton is on a rising ground, from whence there is an easy gradual descent for many miles on all quarters, except the north and north-west, from whence, at the distance of one mile, it is sheltered by a range of hills covered with woods. It has a most beautiful appearance, and in fact has been found one of the healthiest places, as it is situated in the middle of one of the most healthful countries on the whole continent. It is upon the great post road, almost equally distant from New-York and Philadelphia, so as to be a centre of intelligence, and have an easy conveyance of every thing necessary, and yet to be wholly free from the many temptations in every great city, both to the neglect of study and the practice of vice. The truth is, it is to this happy

circumstance, so wisely attended to by the first trustees, that we owe our being enabled to keep up the discipline of the college with so great regularity, and so little difficulty. We do not wish to take any honour in this respect to ourselves. Doubtless the masters of every college will do their best in this respect. But it is not in the power of those who are in great cities, to keep the discipline with equal strictness, where boys have so many temptations to do evil, and can so easily and effectually conceal it after it is done. With us, they live all in college, under the inspection of their masters; and the village is so small, that any irregularity is immediately and certainly discovered, and therefore easily corrected.

It has sometimes happened, through rivalry or malice, that our discipline has been censured as too severe and rigorous. This reproach I always hear, not with patience only, but with pleasure. In the mouth of an adversary, it is a clear confession that the government is strict and regular. While we avail ourselves of this, we prove that the accusation of oppressive rigour is wholly without foundation, from the number of scholars, and the infrequency of public censures, but above all from the warm, and almost enthusiastic attachment of those who have finished their course. Could their esteem and friendship be expected in return for an austere and rigorous confinement, out of which they had escaped as birds out of the snare of the fowler? We admit that it is insupportable to the idle and profligate; for either they will not bear with us, or we will not bear with them; but from those who have ap-

plied to their studies, and reached the honours of college, we have, almost without exception, found the most sincere, active, and zealous friendship.

5. This college was founded, and hath been conducted upon the most catholic principles. The charter recites as one of its grounds, "That every religious denomination may have free and equal liberty and advantage of education in the said college, any different sentiments in religion notwithstanding." Accordingly there are now, and have been from the beginning, scholars of various denominations from the most distant colonies, as well as West-India islands; and they must necessarily confess, that they never met with the least uneasiness or disrespect on this account. Our great advantage on this subject, is the harmony of the board of trustees, and the perfect union in sentiment among all the teachers, both with the trustees and with one another. On this account, there is neither inclination nor occasion to meddle with any controversy whatever. The author of this address confesses, that he was long accustomed to the order and dignity of an established church, but a church which hath no contempt or detestation of those who are differently organized. And as he hath ever been in that church an opposer of lordly domination and sacerdotal tyranny, so he is a passionate admirer of the equal and impartial support of every religious denomination which prevails in the northern colonies, and is perfect in Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, to the unspeakable advantage of those happy and well-constituted governments.

With respect to the college of New-Jersey, every

question about forms of church government is so entirely excluded, that though I have seen one set of scholars begin and finish their course, if they know nothing more of religious controversy than what they learned here, they have that science wholly to begin. This is altogether owing to the union of sentiment mentioned above; for if you place, as teachers in a college, persons of repugnant religious principles, they must have more wisdom and self-denial than usually fall to the lot of humanity, if the whole society is not divided into parties, and marshalled under names, if the changes are not frequent, and when they take place, they will be as well known as any event that can happen in such a society. On the contrary, there is so little occasion with us to canvass this matter at all, that, though no doubt accident must discover it as to the greatest number, yet some have left the college as to whom I am wholly uncertain, at this hour, to what denomination they belong. It has been, and shall be our care, to use every mean in our power to make them good men and good scholars; and if this is the case, I shall hear of their future character and usefulness with unfeigned satisfaction, under every name by which a real Protestant can be distinguished.

Having already experienced the generosity of the Public in many parts of the continent of America, I cannot but hope that the gentlemen of the islands will not refuse their assistance, according to their abilities, in order to carry this seminary to a far greater degree of perfection than any to which it has yet arrived. The express purpose to which the

benefactions now requested will be applied, is the establishment of new professorships, which will render the institution not only more complete in itself, but less burdensome to those who have undertaken the important trust. The whole branches of mathematics and natural philosophy are now taught by one professor; and the president is obliged to teach divinity and moral philosophy, as well as chronology, history, and rhetoric, besides the superintendance and government of the whole. The short lives of the former presidents have been by many attributed to their excessive labours; which, it is hoped, will be an argument with the humane and generous, to lend their help in promoting so noble a design.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient,

humble Servant,

*Nassau Hall, at Princeton, New Jersey, }
March 21, 1772. }*

JOHN WITHERSPOON.

Proper Forms of Donations to the College by Will.

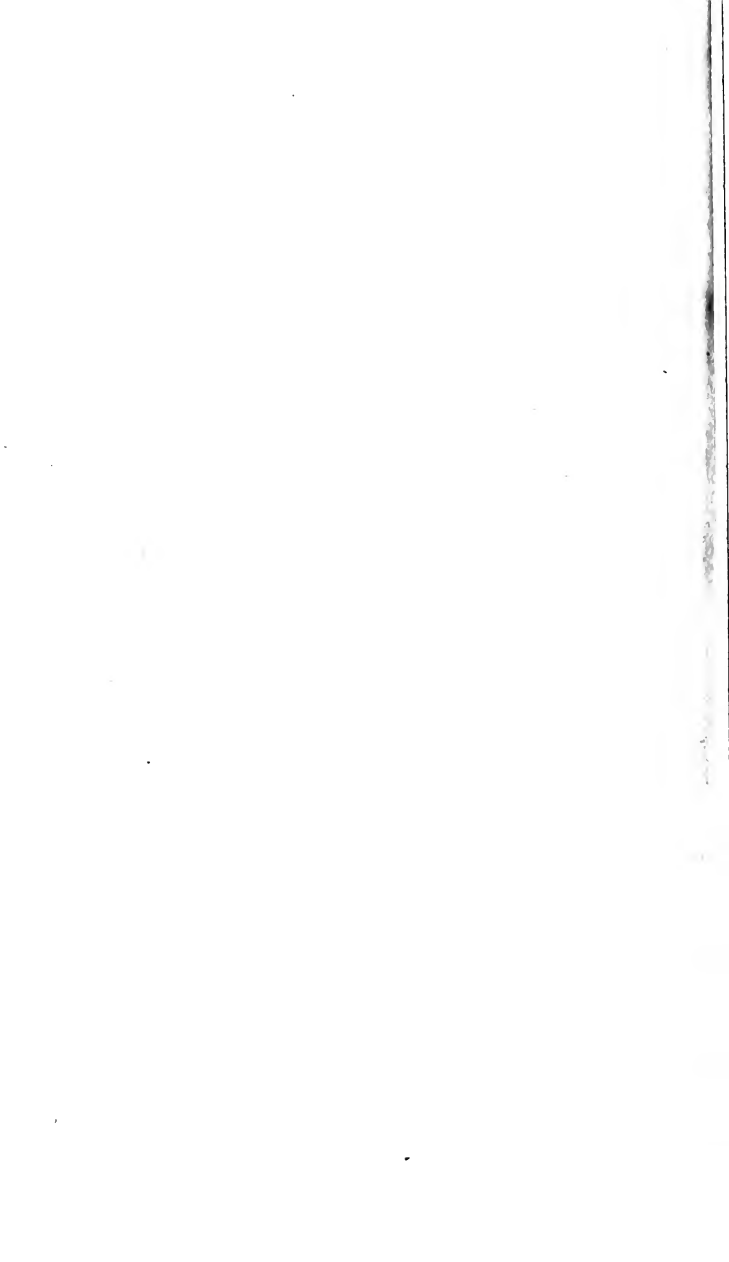
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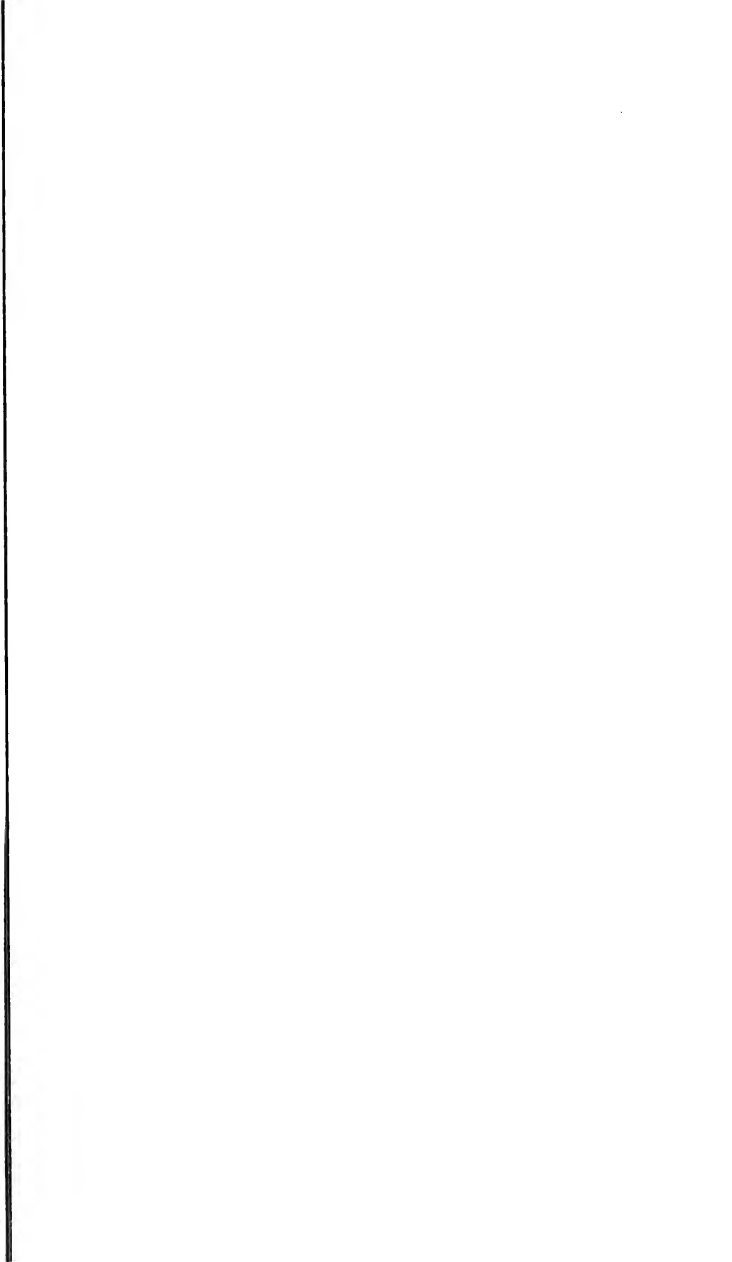
Item, I, A. B. do hereby give and bequeath the sum of unto the *Trustees of the College of New-Jersey*, commonly called *Nassau-Hall*, the same to be paid within months next after my decease; and to be applied to the uses and purposes of the said College.

Of Real Estates.

I, A. B. do give and devise unto the *Trustees of the College of New-Jersey*, commonly called *Nassau-Hall*, and to their successors for ever, all that certain messuage and tract of land, &c.

END OF VOL. VIII.





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