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*The true Intention, publick Use and Importance of Academick Education considered.*

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A

# S E R M O N

Preached before the  
UNIVERSITY of OXFORD,

At St. MART's,

O N

ACT-SUNDAY, *July* 13. 1755.

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By WILLIAM PARKER D. D.  
Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY,  
and F. R. S.

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## PHILIPP. IV. 8.

*Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

**I**T is a great advantage to creatures situated under conditions of behaviour for the attainment of happiness, to have the general out-lines of duty set before them in a conspicuous light. We have in the text, a short and clear summary of qualifications requisite to compleat the christian character. A character, which once rendered christianity amiable to mankind in the face of its adversaries: and if any true love of virtue prevailed as intimately, as it ought, upon many who pretend to be animated

thereby, the tendency of the gospel still to promote the same character would again recommend it to some of our modern deists, and unbelievers. The character is very extensive: including not only the rules of rigid virtue, and of rough unpolished honesty, but all the delicacy of lovely, engaging conduct, and chaste elegance of manners. We are commanded to pursue not only *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, if there be any virtue* acknowledged in them: but also to adorn our christian demeanour, and recommend it to the general esteem of mankind, by studying likewise *whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any praise* justly to be ascribed to them.

We are commanded to imitate such conduct, as the first converts both learned, and received, and heard, and saw in a great master of address, in a well-educated, discreet apostle. For thus he enjoins, in the words immediately ensuing the text; *those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.* These things will infallibly procure for you solid peace and assurance of mind, with respect to the favour of God; who will also in such  
man-

manner direct the world, that they shall in general obtain social peace, good-will, and esteem among all mankind.

Such a character, more generally cultivated in the christian world, would be of great service to the christian cause. The sceptick, whose pride would not suffer him to be convinced by christian arguments, would be silenced by the polite lenity of christian conduct. The fine gentleman could not any longer pretend to be ashamed of being a christian: because the best christian would be the gentleman of the most accomplished, and engaging manners. True christian decorum, and a sincere desire to win all men, would wonderfully recommend christianity to the love of all men.

But this conciliatory character, this chaste deference to the esteem and affections of men, which thus merits the regard of christians in general, even for the sake of christianity, will particularly claim the attention of the christian scholar; ought still more especially to be the reigning ornament of academick education. Such characters abounding in literary societies will be their principal support in civilized states: the promotion of them demands, on this account, to be made a principal point of view in academick institutions: and the obligation will  
have

have it's influence upon those, who desire to recommend the places where themselves were educated.

It may be said perhaps, that the culture of truth is the principal intention of these retired seminaries. But it must be further urged, that these schools are set apart for the education of those, who are to study likewise the recommendation of truth. It is a lesson taught us even by a learned heathen, to employ ourselves not only in inquiry after truth, but also after whatever is decent, and becoming. The lesson will take up much time in learning, and applying it well: and therefore it is, that by his own example he requires us to be, as it were, wholly employed in the task. For every station and rank in life, every society of men, as well as each individual, hath it's proper character; it's proper decency and consistency belonging to that character. And it is the injunction of the apostle that we should meditate not only upon what is *true*; but also upon what is *lovely* in our station, and *of good report*. Indeed whatever is lovely and of good report is a branch of truth to be studied, because it is a branch of consistency with moral character.

There is indeed such a thing, as rigid virtue, and rude enthusiastick religion personal to a man's self, without any regard to mankind. I  
will



will not deny this to be virtue and religion. And perhaps it may sometimes have it's uses, without designing them. But *this* one may venture to affirm, that virtue and religion regardless of society, and of the means whereby they may recommend themselves to society, will lose above half their praise, because they will lose above half their beneficial use and effect. For man was not born merely to make himself happy. We are introduced as into a great theatre, and obliged to please, that we may improve many, who stand around us, in our action; in order that we may please, and receive approbation from the great master of rewards.

Thus hath the apostle opened a large field of meditation before us. I flatter myself, I shall have your candid attention, whilst I enlarge a little, before this audience, upon such qualities, as will ever be an ornament of learned societies, are usually prescribed as a subject of joint prayer before this congregation, and will ever vindicate academick institutions. For religion, learning, virtue, and good manners will render every society, that duly cultivates them, greatly beneficial in example, as well as instruction, to the commonwealth. Some few remarks then upon the virtues recommended in the text, as proper objects of academick discipline, will shew the  
use

use and importance of such establishments to the publick, and furnish us with some few inferences deducible from the apostle's precept.

Truth then will be the first object of pursuit to the sincerely moral, or religious agent. For upon this alone all moral action, or religious devotion can be rightly founded. Especially should it be the first object of impartial study in these seats, sacred to sedate inquiry after truth, and it's confirmation. Some kind of recess therefore from the world is the very intention of these societies. Yet they are not on this account, to be entirely regardless of the world, it's interests, or good esteem: since they are designed for nurseries of education to persons, who are soon to be ushered into the world, to act a part and maintain a character in it. There may be various kinds of truth proposed for the exercise of young minds within these seats: all tending to the glory of God; many in their essential consequences to the immediate benefit of mankind. The apostle's injunction is universal: *Whatsoever things are true*, are a deserving object of meditation to the christian in general: much more to the christian scholar: he means not indeed all such as are trivial, but such as are useful, and in any degree important. For truths  
of

of various sorts become proper objects of learning, under different degrees of importance, as they affect mankind under various capacities, and relations, whether as individuals, or as social beings, whether as inhabitants of this world, or candidates for a better: truths introductive to several sciences, and professions: truths common to all sciences; and essential to all. These are styled first principles, as being first foundations of science, on which the future superstructure in knowledge is to be raised. These first principles are a kind of intuitive knowledge, or necessary truths resulting from the common sense and reason of mankind, universally confirmed by the unanimous assent, and common experience of mankind in all ages.

How discouraging then, I might have said, how inconsistent with the cause of science, is the request of a late noble sceptick, who would persuade us to set aside all first principles: that is, to set aside the common sense and reason of mankind, and, at this age of the world, to enter upon our journey in science only by induction from experiments! It is, to set aside the experience of all former ages, in order to begin to argue from experience: to set aside all ancient observation, and maxims founded upon universal observation: to set aside universal assent, found-

ed principally upon experimental knowledge, whatever he may think of it, in order to begin to argue from the partial observations of one person, age, or country: a great compliment certainly to the sagacity of that person, age, or country! In short to reject the truths proved by the researches of all our ancestors in science; and, if I may use the expression, to begin the world again in knowledge: to replace mankind back in the very infancy of science: though successive improvements in many practical arts, built upon ancient established principles, have proved, that there was some truth in those principles; and that we have frequently been obliged to our ancestors for the maxims they have left us, yea even for abstract principles, and rules of reasoning.

The apostle's expression seems to suppose many truths established; as the next words seem to imply, that we know in general, what is *just*, and *pure*; and he directs the meditations of the thoughtful christian to all such interesting principles as are thus established. He does not confine our researches, as some would limit them, merely to the letter of holy scripture: for many sciences may be necessary to the full understanding of holy scripture: as figures and allusions are taken from many: and some of the most instructive fathers, and most rational commentators

[ II ]

mentators upon scripture have been those, who had been most conversant in various other sciences.

The truths of revelation indeed will be necessary subjects of serious examination to beings, whose views naturally reach out towards something further than natural powers can enable them to ascertain objects with sufficient clearness: into regions, where, whatever the infidel may think, natural reason strongly points out interests to them. Application then to the sacred volumes will be most salutary and advantageous, and can by none with safety be totally omitted, as comprehending the whole will of the deity concerning us; who first called us into existence, and gives us all our faculties of thinking. But still the attendance on this study will be variously proportioned to other respective engagements in life. All virtuous exercises of the understanding, as they serve to strengthen the intellect, have their special uses in academick societies; where objects of science are set forth in common. The application of principles is to be made afterwards, when the student launches forth into the world, according to the occasions, or exigencies of society, and his own particular profession therein. The apostle opens to our range the whole field of truth. All the wonders of nature, and the whole display of divine power, wisdom, and

goodness in the spiritual or material world become proper objects of contemplation to the rational soul: and the more it expatiates in this field, the more will it find reason to admire and adore the great creator.

The foundations of truth being laid, he directs our meditations in the next place to such things as are calculated to gain respect, or due veneration; ὅσα σεμνὰ: whatsoever things are respectable, or calculated to gain the regard due to any station, wherein providence hath placed us, for the good of the moral system: whether to the private christian, as invested with the christian character: or to the christian dignified with any publick office for the common benefit of society wherein he resides. Each is exhorted to walk worthy of his vocation. For a certain kind of dignity or respect, greater or less, attends every rank, and vocation in life: and whoever is duly attentive to the means of obtaining it, to it's causes and consequences, will soon find it's importance: whoever is duly observant at the same time of the tempers of men with whom he converses, will find, that dignity is to be maintained, not by rigid gravity, or sullen moroseness on the one hand, nor yet by trivial levity, and flattering obsequiousness on the other.

For

For as the one will personally disgust; and thus obstruct that affection of esteem, which is a main support of true dignity: so the other is a natural opposition to all dignity in itself. A character truly respectable, like what is said of virtue, will in general consist in a happy medium of deportment between austerity and levity. Without observance of this golden medium, the highest station may miss of respect: whilst the lowest, even poverty and indigence, with proper conduct, may secure it. For the discreetly good man will be respectable, and respected in every situation.

Too many persons now adays act, as if they did not desire respect, and then complain, that they have it not. For of the two extremes abovementioned, that of thoughtless levity and giddiness seems to have too greatly the ascendancy in the present age. To this inadvertency it is owing, that many start up into men, before they are well-appriized, that they are advanced above the years of childhood: and many slide down into old age, before they have well begun, or are well prepared to act the part of men. Through this levity, and it's attendant vices, they lose the respect of manhood, of old age, of superior rank or fortune. For nothing can more effectually tend to bring all orders and  
stations

stations to a level, than promiscuous dissoluteness, and general licentiousness of manners.

The proper sedateness instilled by academick education, and a few years regular submission to academick discipline, will have a strong influence to prevent, or to correct this levity in minds where vicious example may have introduced it. They will here be taught by the dictates of ancient authors, and sages of renown, that whatever behaviour secures true respect must be consistent with character, consistent with honesty, consistent with honour, and the relative honour particularly required in that station. Wherefore the word among the Latins is often render'd *honestum*; which implies all these qualities. Whereas the english word *honest*, as it is translated in the text, does not so fully answer the idea of the greek word *σεμνά*. We may remark however, that this injunction of the apostle should be a recommendation of christian religion to our men of professed honour. For if this be their grand fundamental of duty, they have here a full direction to act according to it. But then at the same time it ought not to exclude out of moral character other principles or virtues: being founded in, or essentially coincident with them. For true honour will always have regard to justice, with which it is here  
joined



joined by the apostle, as a companion ; ὅσα σπουδαῖα, ὅσα δίκαια.

The elements of justice, flowing from the natural relations of mankind, seemingly connected with the very nature of moral agents, of all especially whose sphere of activity reaches beyond themselves, and who may either affect, or be affected by the actions of other beings, will necessarily demand the attention of all, whose happiness is so deeply founded in social welfare. The principles of natural law are those established rules of right and equity, which one rational agent may expect from another. On the observance of these the happiness of social beings is made dependent in the order of nature. They are what the plan of nature, directive to social welfare, according to the divine establishment, prescribes. The principles are general ; to be imbibed early ; that particular cases may afterwards be solved thereby : consequences must be deduced, and rules learnt whereby the deductions may be securely made.

Young persons are apt to complain of the drineness of the early studies prescribed to them in this place : that the grammar of sciences, if I may so stile it, is dull. And it is no wonder, if to many it should so appear. The case is, they  
fit

want to hasten into active life, before they are fit for it. Speculation is too abstracted, and requires too much sedateness for their volatile spirits, eager to be engaged in action. Many parents are too apt to encourage this forwardness: and thereby ruin many children. For the elements of practical wisdom are necessary to be learnt. But when is this grammar to be learnt so easily as in youth? It will be the security of these initiates in life, at least a security of the state, wherein they are to converse, that they should be acquainted with the principles of moral action, before they enter upon action. For the conduct of every individual will in some degree affect the community. General abstract rules, whereof experience alone can shew the full use, may perhaps appear dull to young minds, for this reason, among others, because usually comprized in general, abstract terms. The meaning of these terms is obscure, or not familiar to them, because remote from common life, and conversation. Their inexperience veils over the uses, which their forefathers have felt; who compiled these epitomes of science. But let them wait a little: let them learn the language of equity: let them pay a deference to the experience of the aged, and attend to the lessons of active, prudent men, who have gone before them!

them! Life will then soon teach them to apply the rules to advantage. *Days will speak: and Multitude of years will teach wisdom.* The benefit of what youthful memory had treasured up will soon be felt. The application of rules will afford delight: and the delight of doing good, under daily exigencies of social life, will urge them forwards to daily improvements in the knowledge of social equity. No man ever yet repented his early attendance upon the study of natural justice, who endeavoured to conform his own life, and that of his fellow-beings to the dictates of justice.

The welfare of society, and the security of individuals requires, that the principles of justice, and the rules of deduction from thence should be well-understood in states. And in proportion as these shall be more or less precisely defined and ascertained, communities will be rightly esteemed more or less civilized. The honour of a nation therefore, as well as the happiness of its private members, demands attendance upon these studies. And the greater the attendance and encouragement shall be, which is given to these studies in our two ancient seats of literature, the less reason will remain to be pleaded for any precipitancy in sending young persons abroad, during the most perilous age of life, un-

der a prospect of pursuing this part of knowledge more successfully.

The principles of this branch of ethical science may become a proper object of consideration to young persons situated here, under different views and intentions. Some will hereafter be called forth to investigate cases of civil difficulty: some to explain the obligations of justice in social life, and to enforce the practice thereof upon their fellow-beings by motives of nature, moral duty, and religion: some to execute the functions of civil justice: some to determine cases of distributive justice: some to be concerned in enacting, or maintaining laws of commutative justice. Particular studies may be directed, according to the province, which the student designs to undertake. But there are fundamental principles common, and essential to *all*. It is proper that *all* should know the grounds upon which laws are founded. They are rules and precepts of social conduct, grounded upon nature, enforced upon the members of civil bodies, for publick good, by proper functions and authority. The elements of civil law may be considered as grammars of equity deduced from nature. Let young persons reflect a little within themselves upon the benefit which they feel from their remembrance of the rules of grammar

mar in language. Irksome, and uselefs as these rules might have appeared to them, when first learnt, in childhood, yet when they now come to converse familiarly with ancient authors, to embrace the counfels of them that have lived many ages before them, in distant regions, to form accurate judgments upon their works and style, the rules are found beneficial, and the recollection pleafant. Now what grammar is in languages, the elements of feveral fciences, of logick, metaphyficks, ethicks, natural juftice, and fuch like, are in philofophy and fpeculation; preparatives for active life; the firft ftamina of future regular knowledge. Thefe ftamina fhould be early combined and fitly joined together, that by gradual increafe of fciences, a well compacted able conftitution may in due time of maturity be formed. Never can fure foundations be more opportunely laid, than within thefe feminaries of learning, in the feafon of youth, that life afterwards may admit time to raife an ufeful and convenient fuperftructure.

But, that a purity of intellect may be preferred for ftudy, let a purity of morals be carefully cultivated within thefe feats; and let us ftrictly follow the apoftle's next direction, in fixing our affections upon *whatfoever things are pure.*

For it is well known to experience, that sensuality, and loose indulgences will grievously impair the intellect, and deprave the judgment. They will set the man at variance with truth, with justice, with principles of solid science, with his fellow-beings, and with himself. They will render it oftentimes his apparent interest not to find things as they really are, and consequently make it his endeavour to find them otherwise than they really are. His study will be to deceive himself: and then it is no wonder, if he falls into error in the most important concerns: no wonder, that when vice, ignorance, and ill-judgment have taken possession of the fort, truth and salutary knowledge should not be permitted to enter. Let young persons therefore guard well the springs, from whence *are the issues of life*; cautious of admitting habits of vice into their minds, let them open all its avenues to useful science; jealous of any corrupt maxims that may be instilled by libertines. The retirement of these seats from the gay and giddy world, the wholesome discipline instituted therein to oppose the insinuations of the corrupted part, are favourable tuitions to the pure mind: circumstances favourable to the cause of early virtue.

Who-

Whoever duly conforms himself to that discipline, studious to recommend himself as an useful member of society, will at the same time industriously comply with the two last parts of the apostle's precept, as virtues of accomplishment in the christian character; he will frequently meditate, or, as the original word may imply, will meditate so, as to estimate their true value, upon *whatsoever things are lovely, and of good report*. For I shall comprize these two remaining characters in one. Because, though whatever is lovely may, through envy and depravity of the world, not at all times obtain a good report: yet whatever is truly amiable in itself will at all times deserve it: will for the most part obtain it too, from all, whose esteem is truly valuable: and as for all the rest, it is rather riotous fickle noise of popular voice, than truly *good report*.

A kind of natural satisfaction in the good esteem of mankind, from the accomplishment of such undertakings as are the common objects of praise, is wisely implanted by providence for wise and useful purposes; as an incitement to actions which are in themselves excellent and amiable. And it is here acknowledged, nay urged by the apostle, as a worthy motive of action. We are  
 exhorted

exhorted by him to have our view directed to *whatsoever things are of good report*. For there is a beauty and gracefulness in the decorum of moral character, naturally pleasing to all minds, as there is a beauty in the proportion of natural bodies agreeable to all eyes. This pleasing sense of beauty, I say, is no doubt implanted by the creator for wise and good ends; to recommend the excellence of moral character, or the fitness of well-adjusted proportion in bodies, to the admiration, and esteem of men: that they may be eagerly impelled, as it were, by this instinctive sense, to cultivate, and improve, and make a right application of what is thus agreeable to the sight, and human soul. For the natural affections are the instinct that excite mankind to action. They are the moving gale: reason is the pilot designed to guide the vessel.

This sense of beauty in decorum, or what I may call moral proportion, appears to be natural, because universal; not confined to particular nations, or ages, or climates; but in some degree diffused through the whole human species: in some places, or instances perhaps, like other sensations, depraved by false habit, or national custom, but no where totally extinguished.

Whoever



Whoever then shall endeavour to degrade this natural sentiment into an imputation of weakness, as a <sup>a</sup> late noble writer hath attempted to do, representing it as founded in human pride, and only a vanity in human nature, will in the event be discover'd to have pride and vanity enough in himself to contradict the universal sense, I had almost said the natural instinct, of all mankind. He will strongly evince the truth of an old remark, that the enemies to christian revelation are at the same time enemies to moral virtue: he will be an enemy to the most refined branch of moral virtue, and for this reason probably so inveterate an adversary to christian religion above all others, because this religion is the best friend to modesty, to decorum, and to virtue in general. But no wonder, that a man should thus endeavour to root up the very foundations of decorum, who could write in favour of incest, and take his model of conjugal fidelity from Turkey: who could ascribe to the worst, and lowest of motives one species of modesty universally natural, to a desire only of obtaining "<sup>b</sup> a more uncontrolled, and undisturbed gratification of sensual appetite."

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<sup>a</sup> Bolingb. Philosoph. Works, Vol. 4. p. 126-7. Octav. Edit.

<sup>b</sup> Ib. 127.

What he advances concerning modesty is not only shocking to the ears of grave, philosophick scholars, whom he asserts to have taken "a great deal of dull pains" in defending it, though Cicero be in the number of it's advocates, but must necessarily be so likewise to every man of polite thought; to every man that has any sense of delicacy, I had almost said, of common humanity. For banish modesty; and you with it banish one of the most refined virtues which can distinguish, and give lustre to human nature. Banish decorum; and you with it banish a most civilized, cementing virtue: a virtue, which restrains from savage brutality, and is one of the best ornaments, and guardians of almost every other virtue: a virtue, of which the civilized part of mankind have ever retained a most delicate sensibility, and the more they were civilized, the quicker was their sense of the accomplishment, and the more delighted were they with the sensation. But still a sense thereof has in some degree been natural to *all*, even to the most unrefined. And upon the rudiments of nature it was, that art successfully proceeded in civilizing men. For if, as our <sup>b</sup> author himself presumes his own papers to have shewn, there be such a

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a Ib. 126.      b ib. 154.

thing as a law of nature: we may with equal right assume, that decency is a branch of it; that there is such a law as natural shame, modesty, and decorum.

Let us hear a little what the \* great Roman orator, who was, at least, as good a philosopher, as good a judge of nature, and natural obligations, as the late noble sceptick; let us hear what that diligent inquirer had to say upon the foundations of modesty, and decorum. “ He  
 “ asserts it to be a remarkable privilege of the  
 “ human race, that of all creatures, man alone  
 “ can discern what order and decency are, and  
 “ determine the proper bounds of moderation:  
 “ that of the objects of sight no other being can  
 “ determine the beauty and gracefulness and sym-  
 “ metry of parts: but that reason in man can  
 “ transfer these ideas from material objects to the  
 “ mind; and thence conclude that there is much  
 “ more beauty, and consistency, and regularity  
 “ to be observed in words and actions; lest any  
 “ thing be done in an unbecoming manner: that  
 “ nature hath assigned to man this character of  
 “ great preeminence above other animals, a cha-  
 “ racter of constancy, moderation, and modesty:  
 “ that a first obligation deducible from this duty

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a Tull. de Offic. Lib. 1. cap. 4, 28 &c.

“ of decorum is, to behave ourselves agreeably  
 “ to nature ; that its influence will be seen in re-  
 “ gulating our conduct by nature : that our con-  
 “ duct will be then approved, when it is con-  
 “ formed to nature : in short, that accomplished  
 “ virtue and decorum are convertible terms, and  
 “ coincident in their very essence : that what is  
 “ compleatly virtuous is decent, and what is decent  
 “ is virtuous. From hence we see what this  
 great philosopher thought of modesty ; that it is  
 a virtue founded in nature, and the natural rela-  
 tions of things, not dependent upon custom or  
 fashion, or vain imaginations and caprices of  
 man, or pride of man.

But we christians have fundamental principles  
 to enforce the virtue by still an higher authority  
 than the mere deductions of man. Let us pass  
 then from the Roman to the great christian ora-  
 tor ; who, of the two, will always have the  
 greater weight in this place, though less perhaps  
 with the noble author's friends. A full compre-  
 hensive precept of decorum is delivered to us in  
 the text. And in his own example no man could  
 be more observant of decorum than St. Paul.  
 He hath left us a speedy, ingenuous apology for  
 himself, when he once had inadvertently trans-  
 gressed it, before the high-priest. His speeches be-  
 fore Felix, and king Agrippa, his epistle to Phi-  
 lemon,

lemon, and many passages of those to the Corinthians are masterly instances of modest and polite address. They are proofs that the apostle must have been studious of all the becoming methods of demeanor, and application to the hearts of men, who could thus command them upon every fit occasion, with so much readiness and genteel facility.

Thus have I enlarged, perhaps longer than your patience can well excuse me, upon the several heads of duty contained in the precept of the text; urging them not merely as of natural and christian obligation, but as necessary branches also of academick discipline. For as duties of practice indeed they become subjects of daily regard to every christian; but as matters of science they become, in places of liberal education, subjects of early inquiry to the industrious student: that by general principles treasured up in season particular practice may afterwards be well-conducted: that the servant of God whether in the ministry of the church, or any civil office of the state, may in his province be able to satisfy the scrupulous, to reclaim the vicious, and to confirm the well-disposed mind: that in doubtful cases, he may be furnished with materials for the solution of difficulties. For doubtful cases will arise from

the various occurrences of life, under every head of duty ; and the dubious mind is to be rendered easy and secure. Maxims and distinctions early learnt will seasonably occur, for the solution of scruples in others, or the prevention of them in ourselves : peace to our own minds, and to those of our fellow members in society, will be preserved. Nature here will proceed a great way in pointing out what duty is : natural conscience will suggest much : natural sentiments of truth, justice, and decorum will present themselves : these in general will be the same, or analogous at least amongst all mankind, where nature has not been greatly violated by long habits of national vice. But still natural reason is weak : and wherever it *is* weak, christian revelation comes in graciously to its succour. Yet the books of revelation will in some instances want to be explained, at this distance of time from their first delivery. Customs, figures, and allusions become obscured by antiquity. These are to be investigated. Here then ancient truth becomes an object of pursuit : the scholar must retire back into preceding days : he must retire from his acquaintance into distant climes : he must travel many hours within his own closet. But though he sometimes secludes himself from mankind, he must not be entirely negligent of the interests of mankind :

mankind: though he is frequently out of the world, yet he must be like those that are sometimes in it. Here the other parts of the apostle's precept will come with full force upon him, to attend to justice, character, and decorum.

The institution of our academick discipline will be fully recommended by arguments suggested in the foregoing remarks. Many are the advantages which attend this, and her sister nursery of learning within this kingdom: some of them almost peculiar to themselves, *all* friendly to pure and polite literature. It would be needless to enlarge here upon the benefits, which you feel, much better than I can express, from the very ample collections of writings ready to be consulted, both in ancient and modern science: the rules and customs instituted for the promotion of true religion, and sound morality: the stated calls of daily address in publick devotion to the great dispenser of all intellectual abilities: the hours appointed for regular application to study: the distinct societies into which the students are distributed by their several founders, for more commodious regulation: the walls to seclude from the converse of the unlearned, and to confine within proper limits of inspection: the officers within those walls to guard: the tutors to convey

convey instruction : the returns of publick exercise to excite emulation : all these wise institutions conspire in promoting one great and good design. You cannot overlook one emolument arising from the connexion of students among themselves, residing within private walls, restrained in some measure, whether they will, or no, to literate conversation ; which will incidentally at least intrude itself upon them within those walls. That friendly commerce of learning, and easy exchange of knowledge, which by familiar intercourses is carried on within these seats, is a great improvement to the labours of the young industrious student. Hereby he oftentimes gains much science without the trouble of searching deeply after it ; and gleans at proper seasons of the day from the fields of others, whilst his own harvest is sown early, and grows up amply at home in his morning hours. But let him remember, that a stock of science must carefully be laid in betimes, that he may thus communicate, and receive mutual benefit : he must be acquainted with the merchandice of the country in which he trafficks, and have something valuable to give, or else he will gain but little by the correspondence.

It is often said, let the young person, to be polite, learn men betimes. But alas ! it is often  
dangerous



dangerous to learn men too soon, without proper principles to guard against them. Let him first listen to universal rules in history, founded on the experience of ages, concerning the wiles of men, the arts of seduction, the insinuations of evil morals. Then let him step forth, clad in the armour of truth and righteousness, and even then warily trust himself before the adversary. For it is said by an apostle, and a saying it is too well grounded in experience, *that evil communications will corrupt good manners*; much more will they be ready to introduce evil manners, where good ones have not already occupied the soil.

It is not difficult to perceive how premature acquaintance with the world, under the modern name of travelling, becomes perilous to very young, untutored minds. The most glaring characters, and such as are most likely to affect them are not always the most strictly virtuous. Men of the brightest natural abilities may, according to the state of human depravity, be tinged with some prevailing vice or error. Many splendid qualifications in the example may recommend the vice; perhaps dignify luxury, debauchery, or impiety with the name of politeness, and establish a vicious fashion in a country. If  
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a young creature then shall be permitted to pass through many countries, unguarded by any steady principles of virtue or religion, liable to suck in every error, to imbibe a tincture from every vice, that shall strike his imagination, or fall in with his complexion, in every character, which he esteems polite, in every country, through which he passes, no wonder, if he should return home, as he went out, without any ballast of judgment, an unhappy compound of vice and error, refined only in false notions of politeness, imagining himself accomplished and adorned in that, which may in reality be the degradation of human nature. For what he thinks well-esteemed, he will learn to imitate; and so gather vice, as he travels through the world, even out of a good-natured fondness to please, and recommend himself to the world. The authority of the parent is at a distance: he has perhaps none, or no faithful monitor to controul his appetites: and reason is not yet strong enough to hold the reins: shame and modesty lose much of their restraint in a country unknown; which will be soon left; to which no return will be made; in which no future reproach can be heard: thus temptation and licentiousness riot unopposed: he stays not long enough to see the unhappy consequence of the  
vice

vice, either in health, family, or fortune to his favourite exemplar; and he returns home only to make an unhappy experiment in himself. This is but too often the case of uneducated travellers. Whereas a few years properly employed within either of our seminaries of science at home, would furnish their minds with directing principles of religion and morality, to guard them against corruption: and with natural and civil knowledge, to qualify them for conversation and beneficial correspondence with the best and most accomplished men of all countries. Some such well secured examples have you not long ago sent forth from hence; who have done credit, both in their own, and foreign countries, to the place of their education: and you have other examples, of high rank, and fortune, among those that are now committed to your care; who promise to become equal ornaments.

But it is surely, it is experimentally found dangerous to dismiss the infant mind abroad, as soon as it is inclined to take it's flight, vague, and unstable, unguarded, and unrestrained, to wander, it knows not why, nor whither; to pick up scatter'd seeds at random in it's flight, over the face of the earth: where it may frequently meet with poison, instead of food; and suck in venom, for proper nourishment. The

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young traveller should carry some provision with him, and be taught how to gather more with safety.

Even to manhood, destitute of sound principle, the loose converse of the world will rather add corruption, than instill useful knowledge. And the late noble sceptick, who hath appeared so strenuous an advocate for vice and infidelity, so inveterate an adversary to science, to modesty, to all religion, and the most comfortable of all human hopes, could not probably have made so great advances in impiety, had he not employed himself many years abroad, as well as at home, in gleaning up every little grain of irreligion, every little seed of objection which had been industriously sown, or carelessly scattered upon the face of the earth, by every enemy of true philosophy, either in his own, or foreign countries. For his late unphilosophick legacy is scarce any thing more than an indigested farrago of such borrowed, frequently confuted, objections.

However, from what hath been said one serious inference arises, respecting those, who are concerned in the tuition of youth, within this, and her renowned sister seminary: to take great care, how any one give reason of complaint, that the morals, or instruction of those placed under  
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their care, are neglected within these seats. For, if they do, great will be the reproach and the injury, by their negligence brought upon these schools. Much will be required at their hands both by God and man. For if, according to the son of Sirach, *the bread of the needful be the life of the poor*, and severe be the imputation upon him, who defraudeth them of *the meat which perisheth*, how much more justly severe will the sentence be against him, who defraudeth them, that hunger after living knowledge, of the bread which might *endure unto eternal life!* *But I am persuaded better things of you, my brethren, and things accompanying salvation* both to yourselves, and many others.

One remark indeed may be made, in favour of our academick discipline, from it's nature in general: that the young pupil here can never totally be neglected: because if his proper guardian be less faithful, than he ought, yet in every society there are others constituted in publick office to supply, in some measure, the deficiency; to watch over morals; to give instructions in publick lectures; to exhort, admonish, and correct. A resource, which cannot be so securely provided for, where the immature pupil rambles from one nation to another, unacquainted with his own, under the care of one

single preceptor, who may be faithless abroad, as well as at home, and where the unfaithfulness will be of more dreadful, irremediable consequence.

But for the encouragement of those, who are solicitously engaged here in the useful employment of tuition, one advantage may deserve to be mentioned, incidentally arising to themselves from the industrious discharge of their duty: that whilst they diligently instruct others, they improve themselves. Hints will arise for the illustration, or confirmation of their own knowledge, whilst they are endeavouring to give clear and convincing evidence to others. The person then who is sparing of that instruction, which he ought to give, will be proportionably penurious to himself of that which he might receive from his own industry in communicating knowledge: will seldom be found so studious as he ought, by private cultivation bestowed upon himself, to add to his own stock of science. For where you cut off the drain, the canal will stagnate: but it must amply receive, while it amply conveys the living stream. Whereas stagnant knowledge will be apt to evaporate in forgetfulness. So that in respect to these two sorts of persons will be fully verified that saying of Solomon: *there is, that scattereth, and yet increaseth;*

*creaseth; and there is, that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.*

May every one in these societies, who hath any concern for the reputation of the community, wherein he resideth, discharge punctually the duty of his respective province, whether in private tuition, or in publick discipline! And then no objection can arise to academick institution: much benefit will arise to the state. Many are usually called together at this season, according to annual custom, to receive full testimony of their education in their respective degrees compleated; to be dismissed, as it were, by their common parent, with their several credentials, to their respective employments and professions in life: some still to be retained within her walls for the education of others. May all, as they regard their common parent, who nurtured them, as they desire to promote the glory of God, or the good of the state, be conscientiously faithful in their respective provinces! And may every one who enjoys any office in this place, use his utmost endeavours to cultivate herein true religion, useful learning, every social, civil, and private virtue; in short, whatsoever things are justly esteemed praiseworthy within your own gates; and whatsoever things may be of good report abroad!

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Let this be thy aim, and let this be thy praise, ô ancient city of science! These things if thou dost regularly consult, and zealously promote; then, of the sons, whom thou sendest forth, many will daily add to thy reputation: and they that prosper by thy instructions, will, upon every good occasion, be ready to shew, that they love thee: they will pray for *peace within thy walls*; and no good man will envy plenteous encouragement within thy gates: Many *even for their brethren, and companions sake will wish thee prosperity: yea, because of the house of the Lord our God, they will seek to do thee good.*

F I N I S.



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