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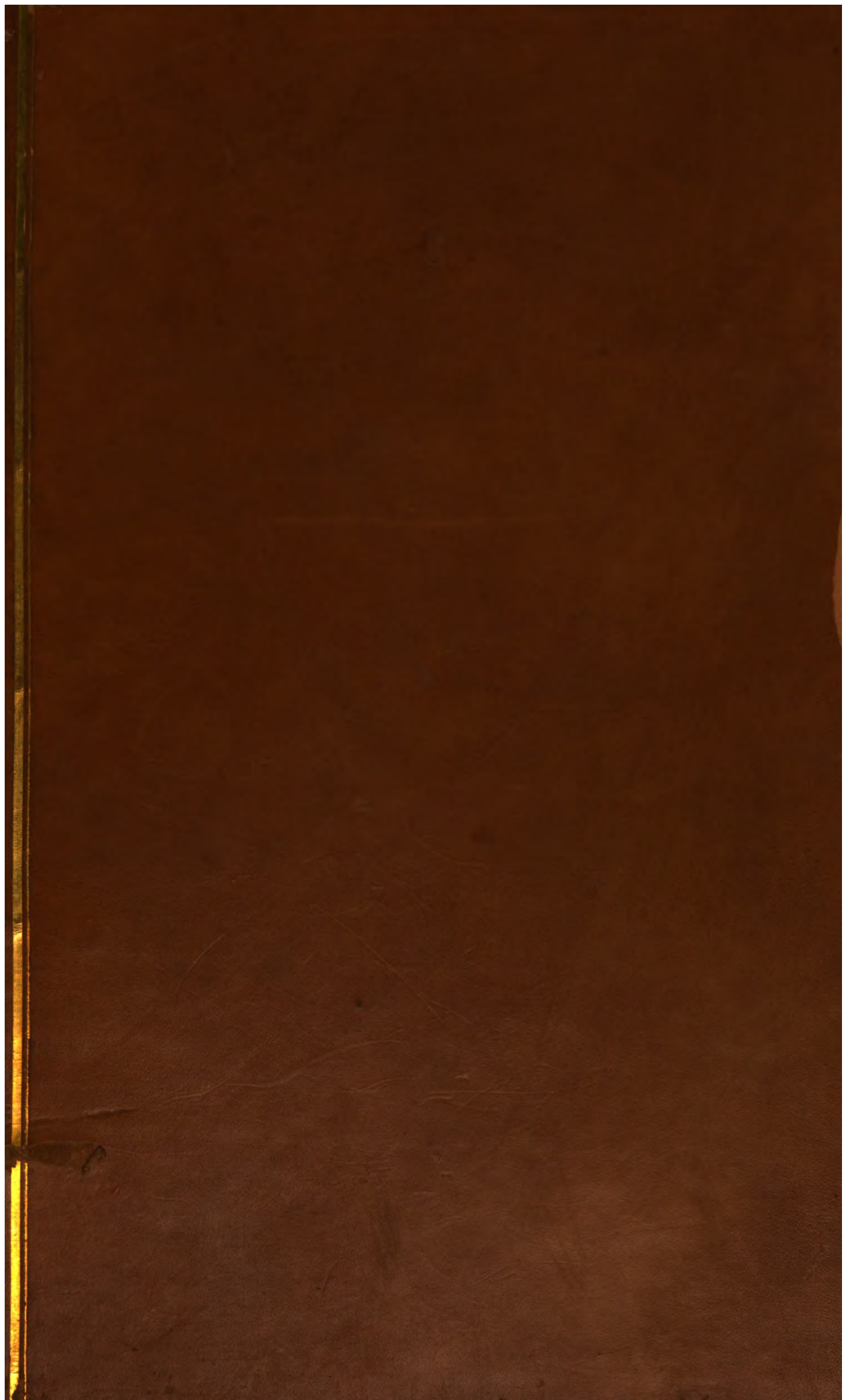
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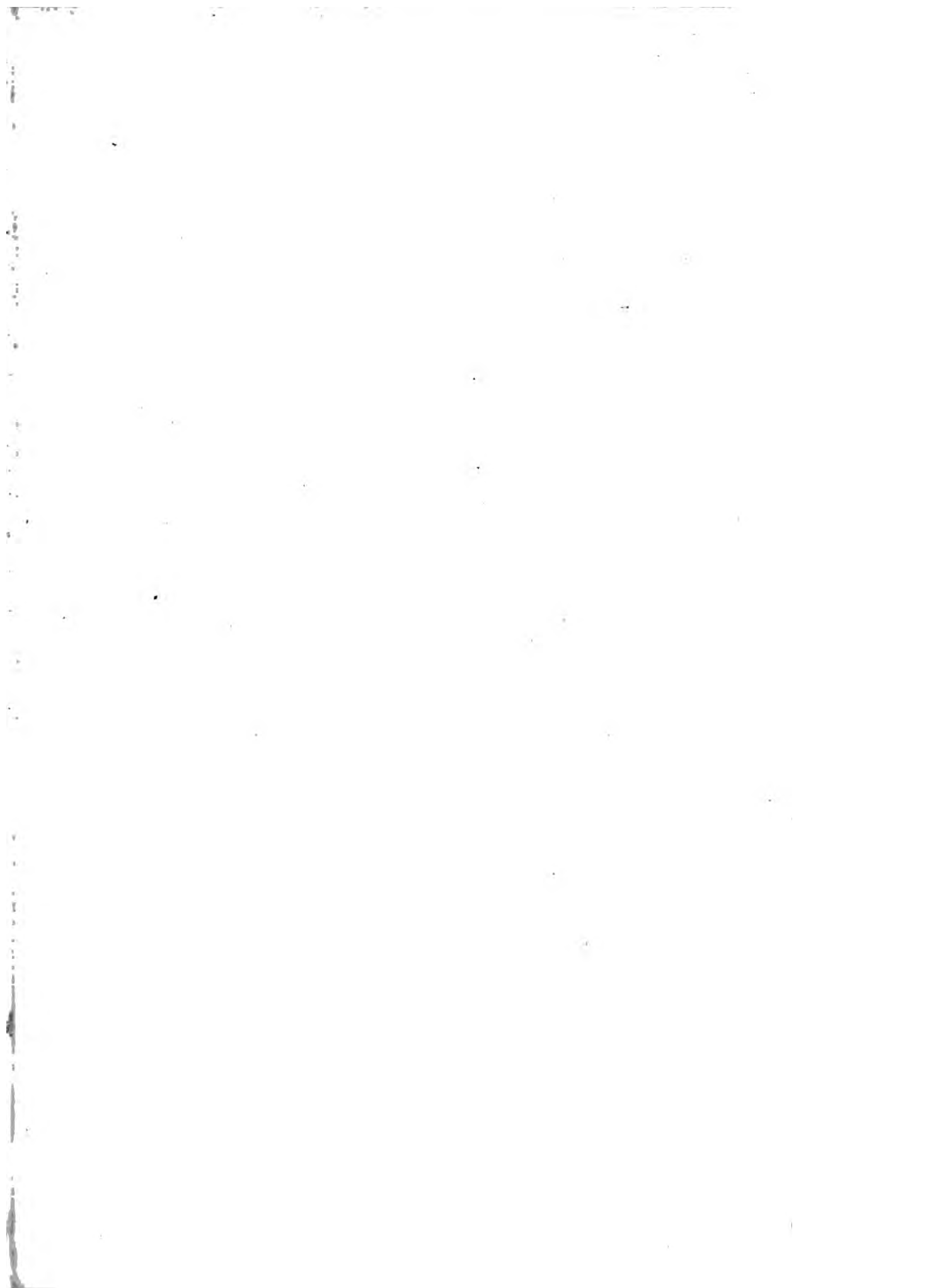


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THE
WORKS
OF
JONATHAN SWIFT, D. D.

DEAN OF ST PATRICK'S, DUBLIN ;

CONTAINING
ADDITIONAL LETTERS, TRACTS, AND POEMS,
NOT HITHERTO PUBLISHED ;

WITH
NOTES,
AND
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
BY
WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.



VOLUME VIII.

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TWELVE SERMONS.

VOL. VIII.

A

TWELVE SERMONS.

It has been usually reported that Swift, though originally studious of his character as a preacher, was never satisfied with his own sermons. He preached, however, regularly as his turn of duty recurred, and always to a crowded congregation. Some years before his death, he gave thirty-five sermons to Dr Sheridan, saying, slightly, "There are a bundle of my old sermons; you may have them if you please, they may be of use to you, they never were of any to me." There are several reasons, which, without disparagement to the real value of these discourses, may have induced the author to think of them with indifference. They contain obvious marks of haste and carelessness; were the objects, says Lord Orrery, of necessity, not of choice, and it is not usual for writers to rate compositions highly on which they have bestowed neither time nor labour. But they are, besides, as sermons, inferior to many written by Swift's contemporaries, and he was too much accustomed to pre-eminence to view with complacency compositions, which tended to place him in a secondary and subordinate situation. They are deficient also in those qualities of oratory which must ever be most valued by the preacher, since, through them, he is to produce his effect upon the congregation at the moment when he himself is addressing them. The sermons of Swift have none of that thunder which appals, or that resistless and winning softness, which melts the hearts of an audience. He can never have enjoyed the triumph of uniting hundreds in one ardent sentiment of love, of terror, or of devotion. His reasoning, however powerful, and indeed unanswerable, convinces the understanding, but is never addressed to the heart; and, indeed, from his instructions to a young clergyman, he seems hardly to have considered pathos as a legitimate ingredient in an English sermon. Occasionally, too, Swift's misanthropic habits break out even from the pulpit; nor is he altogether able to suppress his disdain of those fellow mortals, on whose behalf was accomplished the great work of redemption. With such unamiable feelings towards his hearers, the preacher might indeed command their respect, but could never excite their sympathy. It may be feared that his sermons were less popular from another cause,

imputable more to the congregation than to the pastor. Swift spared not the vices of rich or poor; and, disdaining to amuse the imaginations of his audience with discussion of dark points of divinity, or warm them by a flow of sentimental devotion, he rushes at once to the point of moral depravity, and upbraids them with their favourite and predominant vices in a tone of stern reproof, bordering upon reproach. In short, he tears the bandages from their wounds, like the hasty surgeon of a crowded hospital, and applies the incision knife and caustic with salutary, but rough and untamed severity. But, alas! the mind must be already victorious over the worst of its evil propensities, that can profit by this rough medicine. There is a principle of opposition in our natures which mans itself with obstinacy, even against avowed truth, when it approaches our feelings in a harsh and insulting manner. And Swift was probably sensible, that his discourses, owing to these various causes, did not produce the powerful and pathetic effects most grateful to the feelings of the preacher, because they reflect back to him those of the audience.

But although the sermons of Swift are deficient in eloquence, and were lightly esteemed by their author, they must not be undervalued by the modern reader. They exhibit, in an eminent degree, that powerful grasp of intellect which distinguished the author above all his contemporaries. In no religious discourses can be found more sound good sense, more happy and forcible views of the immediate subject. The reasoning is not only irresistible, but managed in a mode so simple and clear, that its force is obvious to the most ordinary capacity. Upon all subjects of morality, the preacher maintains the character of a rigid and inflexible monitor; neither admitting apology for that which is wrong, nor softening the difficulty of adhering to that which is right; a stern stoicism of doctrine, that may fail in finding many converts, but leads to excellence in the few manly minds who dare to embrace it.

In treating the doctrinal points of belief, (as in his sermon upon the Trinity,) Swift systematically refuses to quit the high and pre-eminent ground which the defender of Christianity is entitled to occupy, or to submit to the test of human reason, mysteries which are placed, by their very nature, far beyond our finite capacities. Swift considered, that, in religion, as in profane science, there must be certain ultimate laws which are to be received as fundamental truths, although we are incapable of defining or analysing their nature; and he censures those divines, who, in presumptuous confidence of their own logical powers, enter into controversy upon such mysteries of faith, without considering that they give thereby the most undue advantage to the infidel. Our author wisely and consistently declared reason an incompetent

judge of doctrines, of which God had declared the fact, concealing from man the manner. He contended, that he who, upon the whole, receives the Christian religion as of divine inspiration, must be contented to depend upon God's truth, and his holy word, and receive with humble faith the mysteries which are too high for comprehension. Above all, Swift points out, with his usual forcible precision, the mischievous tendency of those investigations which, while they assail one fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, shake and endanger the whole fabric, destroy the settled faith of thousands, pervert and mislead the genius of the learned and acute, destroy and confound the religious principles of the simple and ignorant.

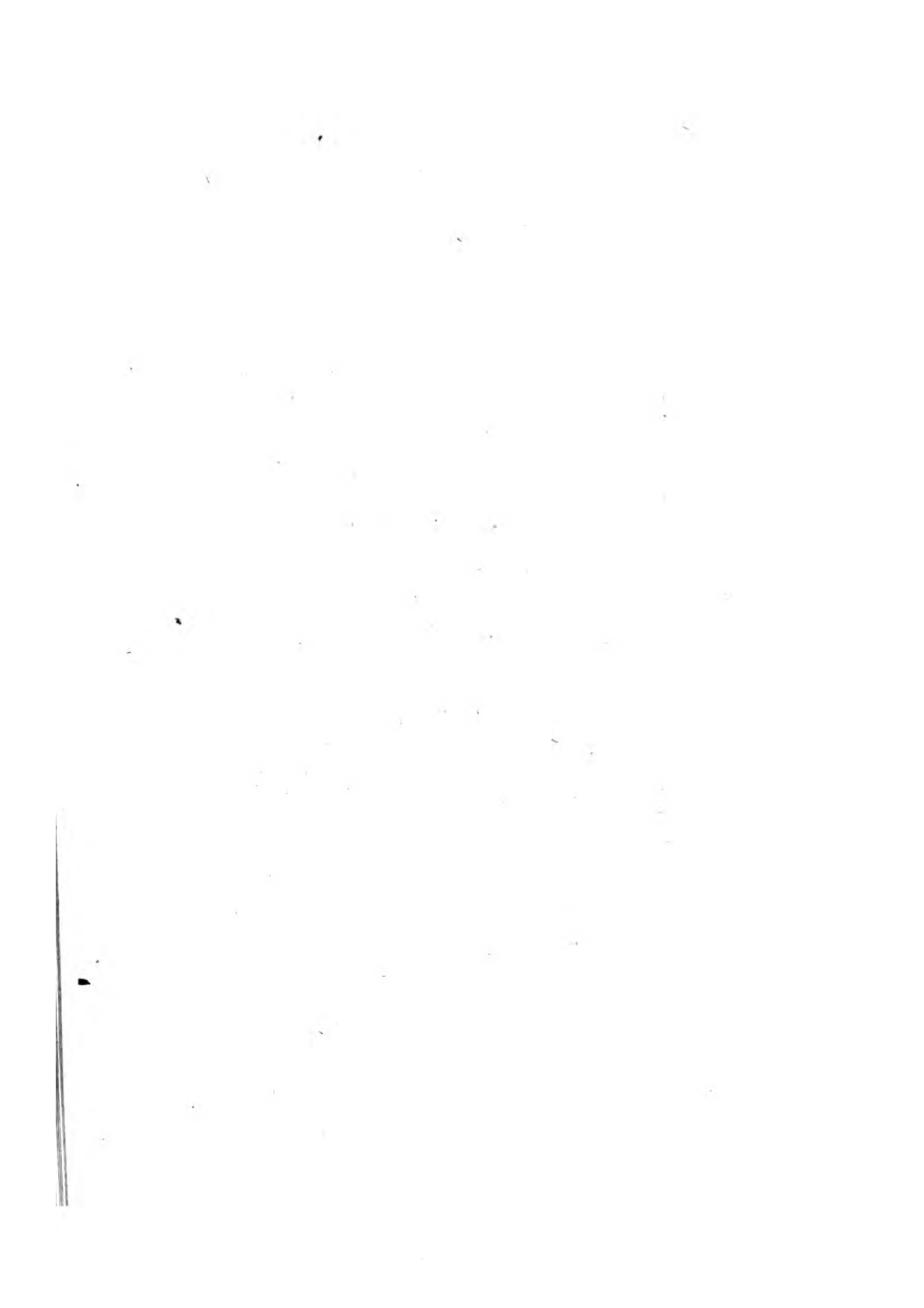
It cannot be denied, that Swift's political propensities break forth more keenly in many of these discourses, than, perhaps, suited the sacred place where they were originally delivered. The sermons on the Martyrdom of Charles, on the Condition of Ireland, and on Doing Good, approach too nearly to the character of political essays. In those on Brotherly Love, on False Witness, and some others, traces of the same party violence are to be found. The Dean's peculiar strain of humour sometimes too displays itself without rigid attention to decorum, of which the singular sermon on Sleeping in Church is a curious instance.

But, on the whole, the admirers of Swift may claim for his sermons a liberal share of the approbation due to his other productions. Twelve only have been recovered by the industry of Mr Nichols, and preceding editors.



THE following Form of Prayer, which Dr Swift constantly used in the pulpit before his sermon, is copied from his own hand-writing:—

“ Almighty and most merciful God! forgive us all our sins. Give us grace heartily to repent them, and to lead new lives. Graft in our hearts a true love and veneration for thy holy name and word. Make thy pastors burning and shining lights, able to convince gainsayers, and to save others and themselves. Bless this congregation here met together in thy name; grant them to hear and receive thy holy word, to the salvation of their own souls. Lastly, we desire to return thee praise and thanksgiving for all thy mercies bestowed upon us; but chiefly for the Fountain of them all, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name and words we further call upon thee, saying, ‘ Our Father,’ &c.”



SERMON I.

THE

DIFFICULTY OF KNOWING ONE'S-SELF.*

2 KINGS, VIII. PART OF THE 13TH VERSE.

*And Hazael said, But what! is thy servant a dog,
that he should do this great thing?*

WE have a very singular instance of the deceitfulness of the heart, represented to us in the per-

* "When I first gave this sermon to be published, I had some doubts whether it were genuine; for, though I found it in the same parcel with three others in the Dean's own hand, and there was a great similitude in the writing, yet, as some of the letters were differently cut, and the hand in general much fairer than his, I gave it to the world as dubious. But as some manuscripts of his early poems have since fallen into my hands, transcribed by Stella, I found, upon comparing them, that the writing was exactly the same with that of the sermon; which was therefore copied by her. Swift, in his Journal to that lady, takes notice that he had been her writing master, and that there was such a strong resemblance between their hands, as gave occasion to some of his friends to rally him, upon seeing some of her letters addressed to him at the bar of the coffee-house, by asking him, how long he had taken up the custom of writing letters to himself? So that I can now fairly give it to the public as one of his, and not at all unworthy of the author." H.

son of Hazael: who was sent to the prophet Elisha, to enquire of the Lord concerning his master the King of Syria's recovery. For the man of God, having told him that the king might recover from the disorder he was then labouring under, began to set and fasten his countenance upon him of a sudden, and to break out into the most violent expressions of sorrow, and a deep concern for it; whereupon, when Hazael, full of shame and confusion, asked, "Why weepeth my lord?" he answered, "Because I know all the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child." Thus much did the man of God say and know of him, by a light darted into his mind from heaven. But Hazael, not knowing himself so well as the other did, was startled and amazed at the relation, and would not believe it possible that a man of his temper could ever run out into such enormous instances of cruelty and inhumanity. "What!" says he, "is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"

And yet, for all this, it is highly probable, that he was then that man he could not imagine himself to be; for we find him, on the very next day after his return, in a very treacherous and disloyal manner, murdering his own master, and usurping his kingdom; which was but a prologue to the sad tragedy which he afterward acted upon the people of Israel.

And now the case is but very little better with most men, than it was with Hazael; however it cometh to pass, they are wonderfully unacquainted with their own temper and disposition, and know very little of what passeth within them:

for, of so many proud, ambitious, revengeful, envying, and ill-natured persons that are in the world, where is there one of them, who, although he hath all the symptoms of the vice appearing upon every occasion, can look with such an impartial eye upon himself, as to believe that the imputation thrown upon him is not altogether groundless and unfair? who, if he were told, by men of a discerning spirit and a strong conjecture, of all the evil and absurd things which that false heart of his would at one time or other betray him into, would not believe as little, and wonder as much, as Hazeel did before him? Thus, for instance; tell an angry person that he is weak and impotent, and of no consistency of mind; tell him, that such or such a little accident, which he may then despise and think much below a passion, shall hereafter make him say and do several absurd, indiscreet, and misbecoming things: he may perhaps own that he hath a spirit of resentment within him, that will not let him be imposed on; but he fondly imagines, that he can lay a becoming restraint upon it when he pleaseth, although it is ever running away with him into some indecency or other.

Therefore, to bring the words of my text to our present occasion, I shall endeavour, in a farther prosecution of them, to evince the great necessity of a nice and curious inspection into the several recesses of the heart, being the surest and the shortest method that a wicked man can take to reform himself; for let us but stop the fountain, and the streams will spend and waste themselves away in a very little time; but if we go about, like children, to raise a bank, and to stop the current, not taking notice all the while of the spring which continually feedeth it, when the

next flood of temptation rises and breaketh in upon it, then we shall find that we have begun at the wrong end of our duty; and that we are very little more the better for it, than if we had sat still, and made no advances at all.

But, in order to a clearer explanation of the point, I shall speak to these following particulars:

First, By endeavouring to prove, from particular instances, that man is generally the most ignorant creature in the world of himself.

Secondly, By inquiring into the grounds and reasons of his ignorance.

Thirdly and *lastly*, By proposing several advantages, that do most assuredly attend a due improvement in the knowledge of ourselves.

First, then, to prove that man is generally the most ignorant creature in the world of himself.

To pursue the heart of man through all the instances of life, in all its several windings and turnings, and under that infinite variety of shapes and appearances which it putteth on, would be a difficult and almost impossible undertaking; so that I shall confine myself to such as have a nearer reference to the present occasion, and do, upon a closer view, show themselves through the whole business of repentance. For we all know what it is to repent; but whether he repenteth him truly of his sins or not, who can know it?

Now the great duty of repentance is chiefly made up of these two parts: a hearty sorrow for the follies and miscarriages of the time past, and a full purpose and resolution of amendment for the time to come. And now, to show the false-

ness of the heart in both these parts of repentance; and,

First, As to a hearty sorrow for the sins and miscarriages of the time past. Is there a more usual thing than for a man to impose upon himself, by putting on a grave and demure countenance, by casting a severe look into his past conduct, and making some few pious and devout reflections upon it; and then to believe that he hath repented to an excellent purpose, without ever letting it step forth into practice, and show itself in a holy conversation? Nay, some persons do carry the deceit a little higher; who, if they can but bring themselves to weep for their sins, are then full of an ill-grounded confidence and security; never considering, that all this may prove to be no more than the very garb and outward dress of a contrite heart, which another heart, as hard as the nether millstone, may as well put on. For, tears and sighs, however in some persons they may be decent and commendable expressions of a godly sorrow, are neither necessary nor infallible signs of a true and unfeigned repentance. Not necessary, because sometimes, and in some persons, the inward grief and anguish of the mind may be too big to be expressed by so little a thing as a tear, and then it turneth its edge inward upon the mind; and, like those wounds of the body which bleed inwardly, generally proves the most fatal and dangerous to the whole body of sin: not infallible, because a very small portion of sorrow may make some tender dispositions melt, and break out into tears; or a man may perhaps weep at parting with his sins, as he would bid the last farewell to an old friend.

But there is still a more pleasant cheat in this

affair, that when we find a deadness, and a strange kind of unaptness and indisposition to all impressions of religion, and that we cannot be as truly sorry for our sins as we should be, we then pretend to be sorry that we are not more sorry for them; which is not more absurd and irrational, than that a man should pretend to be very angry at a thing, because he did not know how to be angry at all.

But, after all, what is wanting in this part of repentance, we expect to make up in the next: and to that purpose we put on a resolution of amendment, which we take to be as firm as a house built upon a rock; so that, let the floods arise, and the winds blow, and the streams beat vehemently upon it, nothing shall shake it into ruin or disorder. We doubt not, upon the strength of this resolve, to stand fast and unmoved amid the storm of a temptation; and do firmly believe, at the time we make it, that nothing in the world will ever be able to make us commit those sins over again, which we have so firmly resolved against.

Thus many a time have we come to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, with a full purpose of amendment, and with as full a persuasion of putting that same purpose into practice; and yet have we not all as often broke that purpose, and falsified that same persuasion, by starting aside, like a broken bow, into those very sins, which we then so solemnly and so confidently declared against.

Whereas had but any other person entered with us into a vow so solemn, that he had taken the Holy Sacrament upon it; I believe, had he but once deceived us by breaking in upon the vow, we should hardly ever after be prevailed upon to

trust that man again, although we still continue to trust our own fears, against reason and against experience.

This indeed is a dangerous deceit enough, and will of course betray all those well-meaning persons into sin and folly, who are apt to take religion for a much easier thing than it is. But this is not the only mistake we are apt to run into; we do not only think sometimes that we can do more than we can do, but sometimes that we are incapable of doing so much: an error of another kind indeed, but not less dangerous, arising from a diffidence and false humility. For how much a wicked man can do in the business of religion, if he would but do his best, is very often more than he can tell.

Thus nothing is more common than to see a wicked man running headlong into sin and folly, against his reason, against his religion, and against his God. Tell him, that what he is going to do will be an infinite disparagement to his understanding, which, at another time, he setteth no small value upon; tell him, that it will blacken his reputation, which he had rather die for than lose; tell him, that the pleasure of sin is short and transient, and leaveth a vexatious kind of sting behind it, which will very hardly be drawn forth; tell him, that this is one of those things for which God will most surely bring him to judgment, which he pretendeth to believe with a full assurance and persuasion: and yet, for all this, he shutteth his eyes against all conviction, and rusheth into the sin like a horse into battle; as if he had nothing left to do, but, like a silly child, to wink hard, and to think to escape a certain and infinite mischief, only by endeavouring not to see it.

And now, to show that the heart hath given in a false report of the temptation, we may learn from this; that the same weak man would resist and master the same powerful temptation, upon considerations of infinitely less value than those which religion offereth; nay, such vile considerations, that the grace of God cannot, without blasphemy, be supposed to add any manner of force and efficacy to them. Thus, for instance, it would be a hard matter to dress up a sin in such soft and tempting circumstances, that a truly covetous man would not resist for a considerable sum of money; when neither the hopes of heaven, nor the fears of hell, could make an impression upon him before. But can any thing be a surer indication of the deceitfulness of the heart, than thus to show more courage, resolution, and activity, in an ill cause, than it doth in a good one? and to exert itself to better purpose, when it is to serve its own pride, or lust, or revenge, or any other passion, than when it is to serve God upon motives of the gospel, and upon all the arguments that have ever been made use of to bring men over to religion and a good life? And thus having shown that man is wonderfully apt to deceive and impose upon himself, in passing through the several stages of that great duty, repentance, I proceed now, in the

Second place, To inquire into the grounds and reasons of this ignorance, “and to show whence it comes to pass that man, the only creature in the world that can reflect and look into himself, should know so little of what passeth within him, and be so very much unacquainted even with the standing dispositions and complexion of his own heart.” The prime reason of it is, because we so

very seldom converse with ourselves, and take so little notice of what passeth within us : for a man can no more know his own heart, than he can know his own face, any other way than by reflection : he may as well tell over every feature of the smaller portions of his face without the help of a looking-glass, as he can tell all the inward bents and tendencies of his soul, those standing features and lineaments of the inward man, and know all the various changes that this is liable to from custom, from passion, and from opinion, without a very frequent use of looking within himself.

For our passions and inclinations are not always upon the wing, and always moving toward their respective objects ; but retire now and then into the more dark and hidden recesses of the heart, where they lie concealed for a while, until a fresh occasion calls them forth again : so that not every transient oblique glance upon the mind, can bring a man into a thorough knowledge of all its strength and weaknesses ; for, a man may sometimes turn the eye of the mind inward upon itself, as he may behold his natural face in a glass, and go away, “ and straight forget what manner of man he was.” But a man must rather sit down and unravel every action of the past day into all its circumstances and particularities, and observe how every little thing moved and affected him, and what manner of impression it made upon his heart ; this, done with that frequency and carefulness which the importance of the duty doth require, would, in a short time, bring him into a nearer and more intimate acquaintance with himself.

But when men, instead of this, do pass away months and years in a perfect slumber of the

mind, without once awaking it, it is no wonder they should be so very ignorant of themselves, and know very little more of what passeth within them than the very beasts which perish. But here it may not be amiss to inquire into the reasons why most men have so little conversation with themselves.

And, *first*, Because this reflection is a work and labour of the mind, and cannot be performed without some pain and difficulty: for, before a man can reflect upon himself, and look into his heart with a steady eye, he must contract his sight, and collect all his scattering and roving thoughts into some order and compass, that he may be able to take a clear and distinct view of them; he must retire from the world for a while, and be unattentive to all impressions of sense; and how hard and painful a thing must it needs be to a man of passion and infirmity, amid such a crowd of objects that are continually striking upon the sense, and solliciting the affections, not to be moved and interrupted by one or other of them! But,

Secondly, Another reason why we so seldom converse with ourselves, is, because the business of the world taketh up all our time, and leaveth us no portion of it to spend upon this great work and labour of the mind. Thus twelve or fourteen years pass away before we can well discern good from evil; and of the rest, so much goes away in sleep, so much in the proper business of our callings, that we have none to lay out upon the more serious and religious employments. Every man's life is an imperfect sort of a circle, which he repeateth and runneth over every day; he hath a set of thoughts, desires, and inclinations, which return upon him in their proper time and order,

and will very hardly be laid aside to make room for any thing new and uncommon : so that call upon him when you please, to set about the study of his own heart, and you are sure to find him pre-engaged ; either he has some business to do, or some diversion to take, some acquaintance that he must visit, or some company that he must entertain, or some cross accident hath put him out of humour, and unfitted him for such a grave employment. And thus it cometh to pass, that a man can never find leisure to look into himself, because he doth not set apart some portion of the day for that very purpose, but foolishly deferreth from one day to another, until his glass is almost run out, and he is called upon to give a miserable account of himself in the other world. But,

Thirdly, Another reason why a man doth not more frequently converse with himself, is, because such conversation with his own heart may discover some vice, or some infirmity lurking within him, which he is very unwilling to believe himself guilty of. For can there be a more ungrateful thing to a man, than to find that, upon a nearer view, he is not that person he took himself to be? that he had neither the courage, nor the honesty, nor the piety, nor the humility, that he dreamed he had? that a very little pain, for instance, putteth him out of patience, and as little pleasure softeneth and disarmeth him into ease and wantonness? that he hath been at more pains, and labour, and cost, to be revenged of an enemy, than to oblige the best friend he hath in the world? that he cannot bring himself to say his prayers, without a great deal of reluctancy ; and when he doth say them, the spirit and fervour of devotion evaporate in a very short time ; and he can scarcely hold out a prayer of ten lines, without a num-

ber of idle and impertinent, if not vain and wicked thoughts coming into his head? These are very unwelcome discoveries that a man may make of himself; so that it is no wonder that every one who is already flushed with a good opinion of himself, should rather study how to run away from it, than how to converse with his own heart.

But farther, If a man were both able and willing to retire into his own heart, and to set apart some portion of the day for that very purpose; yet he is still disabled from passing a fair and impartial judgment upon himself, by several difficulties, arising partly from prejudice and prepossession, partly from the lower appetites and inclinations. And,

First, That the business of prepossession may lead and betray a man into a false judgment of his own heart. For we may observe, that the first opinion we take up of any thing, or any person, doth generally stick close to us; the nature of the mind being such, that it cannot but desire, and consequently endeavour to have some certain principles to go upon, something fixed and unmoveable, whereon it may rest and support itself. And hence it cometh to pass, that some persons are, with so much difficulty, brought to think well of a man they have once entertained an ill opinion of: and, perhaps, that too for a very absurd and unwarrantable reason. But how much more difficult then must it be for a man, who taketh up a fond opinion of his own heart long before he hath either years or sense enough to understand it, either to be persuaded out of it by himself, whom he loveth so well, or by another, whose interest or diversion it may be to make him ashamed of himself! Then,

Secondly, As to the difficulties arising from the

inferior appetites and inclinations; let any man look into his own heart, and observe in how different a light, and under what different complexions, any two sins of equal turpitude and malignity do appear to him, if he hath but a strong inclination to the one, and none at all to the other. That which he hath an inclination to, is always drest up in all the false beauty that a fond and busy imagination can give it; the other appeareth naked and deformed, and in all the true circumstances of folly and dishonour. Thus, stealing is a vice that few gentlemen are inclined to; and they justly think it below the dignity of a man to stoop to so base and low a sin; but no principle of honour, no workings of the mind and conscience, not the still voice of mercy, not the dreadful call of judgment, nor any considerations whatever, can put a stop to that violence and oppression, that pride and ambition, that revelling and wantonness, which we every day meet with in the world. Nay, it is easy to observe very different thoughts in a man of the sin that he is most fond of, according to the different ebbs and flows of his inclination to it. For, as soon as the appetite is alarmed, and seizeth upon the heart, a little cloud gathereth about the head, and spreadeth a kind of darkness over the face of the soul, whereby it is hindered from taking a clear and distinct view of things; but no sooner is the appetite tired and satiated, but the same cloud passeth away like a shadow; and a new light springing up in the mind of a sudden, the man seeth much more, both of the folly and of the danger of the sin, than he did before.

And thus, having done with the several reasons why man, the only creature in the world that can reflect and look into himself, is so very ignorant of what passeth within him, and so much unacquaint-

ed with the standing dispositions and complexions of his own heart: I proceed now, in the

Third and last place, to lay down several advantages, that do, most assuredly, attend a due improvement in the knowledge of ourselves. And,

First, One great advantage is, that it tendeth very much to mortify and humble a man into a modest and low opinion of himself. For, let a man take a nice and curious inspection into all the several regions of the heart, and observe every thing irregular and amiss within him: for instance; how narrow and short-sighted a thing is the understanding! upon how little reason do we take up an opinion, and upon how much less sometimes do we lay it down again! how weak and false ground do we often walk upon, with the biggest confidence and assurance! and how tremulous and doubtful are we very often where no doubt is to be made! Again: how wild and impertinent, how busy and incoherent a thing is the imagination, even in the best and wisest men; insomuch, that every man may be said to be mad, but every man doth not show it! Then, as to the passions; how noisy, how turbulent, and how tumultuous are they! how easy they are stirred and set a-going, how eager and hot in the pursuit, and what strange disorder and confusion do they throw a man into; so that he can neither think, nor speak, nor act, as he should do, while he is under the dominion of any one of them!

Thus, let every man look with a severe and impartial eye into all the distinct regions of the heart; and no doubt, several deformities and irregularities, that he never thought of, will open and disclose themselves upon so near a view; and rather make the man ashamed of himself than proud.

Secondly, A due improvement in the knowledge

of ourselves doth certainly secure us from the sly and insinuating assaults of flattery. There is not in the world a baser and more hateful thing than flattery: it proceedeth from so much falseness and insincerity in the man that giveth it, and often discovereth so much weakness and folly in the man that taketh it, that it is hard to tell which of the two is most to be blamed. Every man of common sense can demonstrate in speculation, and may be fully convinced, that all the praises and commendations of the whole world, can add no more to the real and intrinsic value of a man, than they can add to his stature. And yet, for all this, men of the best sense and piety, when they come down to the practice, cannot forbear thinking much better of themselves, when they have the good fortune to be spoken well of by other persons.

But the meaning of this absurd proceeding seemeth to be no other than this: there are few men that have so intimate an acquaintance with their own hearts, as to know their own real worth, and how to set a just rate upon themselves; and therefore they do not know but that he who praises them most, may be most in the right of it. For, no doubt, if a man were ignorant of the true value of a thing he loved as well as himself, he would measure the worth of it according to the esteem of him who biddeth most for it, rather than of him that biddeth less.

Therefore, the most infallible way to disentangle a man from the snares of flattery, is, to consult and study his own heart; for whoever does that well, will hardly be so absurd as to take another man's words, before his own sense and experience.

Thirdly, Another advantage from this kind of

study is this, that it teacheth a man how to behave himself patiently, when he has the ill fortune to be censured and abused by other people. For a man, who is thoroughly acquainted with his own heart, doth already know more evil of himself, than any body else can tell him: and when any one speaketh ill of him, he rather thanketh God that he can say no worse: for, could his enemy but look into the dark and hidden recesses of the heart, he considereth what a number of impure thoughts he might there see brooding and hovering, like a dark cloud upon the face of the soul; that there he might take a prospect of the fancy, and view it acting over the several scenes of pride, of ambition, of envy, of lust, and revenge; that there he might tell how often a vicious inclination hath been restrained, for no other reason, but just to save the man's credit or interest in the world; and how many unbecoming ingredients have entered into the composition of his best actions. And now, what man in the whole world would be able to bear so severe a test? to have every thought and inward motion of the heart laid open and exposed to the views of his enemies? But,

Fourthly and lastly, another advantage of this kind is, that it maketh men less severe upon other people's faults, and less busy and industrious in spreading them. For a man, employed at home, inspecting into his own failings, hath not leisure to take notice of every little spot and blemish that lieth scattered upon others; or, if he cannot escape the sight of them, he always passes the most easy and favourable construction upon them. Thus, for instance, does the ill he knoweth of a man proceed from an unhappy temper and constitution of body? he then considereth with

himself, how hard a thing it is, not to be borne down with the current of the blood and spirits; and accordingly layeth some part of the blame upon the weakness of human nature, for he hath felt the force and rapidity of it within his own breast; although, perhaps, in another instance, he remembereth how it rageth and swelleth by opposition; and, although it may be restrained, or diverted for a while, yet it can hardly ever be totally subdued.

Or, has the man sinned out of custom? he then, from his own experience, traceth a habit into the very first rise and imperfect beginnings of it; and can tell by how slow and insensible advances it creepeth upon the heart; how it worketh itself, by degrees, into the very frame and texture of it, and so passeth into a second nature; and consequently he hath a just sense of the great difficulty for him to learn to do good, who hath been long accustomed to do evil.

Or, lastly, hath a false opinion betrayed him into a sin? he then calleth to mind what wrong apprehensions he hath made of some things himself; how many opinions, that he once made no doubt of, he hath, upon a stricter examination, found to be doubtful and uncertain; how many more to be unreasonable and absurd. He knoweth farther, that there are a great many more opinions that he hath never yet examined into at all, and which, however, he still believeth, for no other reason, but because he hath believed them so long already without a reason.

Thus, upon every occasion, a man intimately acquainted with himself, consulteth his own heart, and maketh every man's case to be his own, and so puts the most favourable interpretation upon it. Let every man therefore look into his own

heart, before he beginneth to abuse the reputation of another ; and then he will hardly be so absurd as to throw a dart that will so certainly rebound and wound himself. And thus, through the whole course of his conversation, let him keep an eye upon that one great comprehensive rule of Christian duty, on which hangeth not only the law and the prophets, but the very life and spirit of the Gospel too : “ Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.” Which rule that we may all duly observe, by throwing aside all scandal and detraction, all spite and rancour, all rudeness and contempt, all rage and violence, and whatever tendeth to make conversation and commerce either uneasy or troublesome, may the God of peace grant, for Jesus Christ his sake, &c.

Consider what hath been said ; and the Lord give you a right understanding in all things. To whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever.

SERMON II.
ON THE TRINITY.

FIRST PRINTED IN 1744.

FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN, v. 7.

*For there are Three that bear record in Heaven, the
Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost ; and these
Three are One.*

[Of this discourse lord Orrery has said, " It is indeed a sermon, and one of the best of its kind. The mysterious parts of our religion are apt to have dreadful effects upon weak minds. The general comments upon the Sacred Writings, and the several sermons upon the most abstruse points of Scripture, are too often composed in the gloomy style. Damnation, eternal damnation, is placed with all its horror before our eyes ; and we are so terrified at the prospect, that fear makes us imagine we can comprehend mysteries, which, on this side the grave, must be for ever denied to limited understandings. Swift has taken the safest and the properest method of expounding these *arcana*. He advances every position that can be established upon so incomprehensible a subject. He sustains the belief, avows the doctrine, and adapts the matter of faith, as well as possible, to the human capacity. His manner of reasoning is masterly, and his arguments are nervous."

The best illustration of the dean's intentions in preaching this sermon, occurs amongst his 'Thoughts on Religion. "To remove opinions fundamental in religion is impossible, and the attempt wicked, whether those opinions be true or false, unless your avowed design be to abolish that religion altogether. So, for instance, are the famous doctrine of Christ's divinity, which has been universally received by all bodies of Christians, since the condemnation of Arianism under Constantine and his successors; wherefore the proceedings of the Socinians are both vain and unwarrantable, because they will never be able to advance their own opinion, or meet any other success, than breeding doubts and disturbances in the world.—*Qui ratione sua disturbant mœnia mundi.*—The want of belief is a defect that ought to be concealed, when it cannot be overcome. The Christian religion, in the most early times, was proposed to the Jews and heathens without the article of Christ's divinity, which I remember Erasmus accounts for, by its being too strong a meat for babes. Perhaps if it were now softened by the Chinese missionaries, the conversion of these infidels would be less difficult; and we find by the Alcoran, it is the great stumbling-block of the Mahometans. But in a country already Christian, to bring so fundamental a point of faith into dispute, can have no consequences that are not pernicious to morals and public peace."

THIS day being set apart to acknowledge our belief in the Eternal Trinity, I thought it might be proper to employ my present discourse entirely upon that subject; and I hope to handle it in such a manner, that the most ignorant among you may return home better informed of your duty in this great point, than probably you are at present.

It must be confessed, that, by the weakness and indiscretion of busy, or at best of well-meaning people, as well as by the malice of those who are enemies to all revealed religion, and are not con-

tent to possess their own infidelity in silence, without communicating it, to the disturbance of mankind; I say, by these means, it must be confessed, that the doctrine of the Trinity hath suffered very much, and made Christianity suffer along with it. For these two things must be granted: first, that men of wicked lives would be very glad there were no truth in Christianity at all; and, secondly, if they can pick out any one single article in the Christian religion, which appears not agreeable to their own corrupted reason, or to the arguments of those bad people who follow the trade of seducing others, they presently conclude, that the truth of the whole gospel must sink along with that one article. Which is just as wise, as if a man should say, because he dislikes one law of his country, he will therefore observe no law at all; and yet that one law may be very reasonable in itself, although he does not allow it, or does not know the reason of the law-givers.

Thus it hath happened with the great doctrine of the Trinity; which word is indeed not in the scripture, but was a term of art invented in the earlier times to express the doctrine by a single word, for the sake of brevity and convenience. The doctrine then, as delivered in holy scripture, though not exactly in the same words, is very short, and amounts only to this; that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are each of them God, and yet there is but one God. For as to the word Person, when we say there are three Persons; and as to those other explanations in the Athanasian Creed, this day read to you (whether compiled by Athanasius or not), they were taken up three hundred years after Christ, to expound this doctrine; and I will tell you upon

what occasion. About that time there sprang up a heresy of people called Arians, from one Arius, the leader of them. These denied our Saviour to be God, although they allowed all the rest of the gospel, wherein they were more sincere than their followers among us. Thus the Christian world was divided into two parts, till at length, by the zeal and courage of St Athanasius, the Arians were condemned in a general council, and a creed formed upon the true faith, as St Athanasius hath settled it. This creed is now read at certain times in our churches, which, although it is useful for edification to those who understand it, yet, since it contains some nice and philosophical points which few people can comprehend, the bulk of mankind is obliged to believe no more than the scripture doctrine, as I have already delivered it; because that creed was intended only as an answer to the Arians, in their own way, who were very subtle disputers.

But this heresy having revived in the world about a hundred years ago, and continued ever since; not out of a zeal to truth, but to give a loose to wickedness by throwing off all religion; several divines, in order to answer the cavils of those adversaries to truth and morality, began to find out farther explanations of this doctrine of the Trinity, by rules of philosophy; which have multiplied controversies to such a degree, as to beget scruples that have perplexed the minds of many sober Christians, who otherwise could never have entertained them.

I must therefore be bold to affirm, that the method taken by many of those learned men to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, hath been founded upon a mistake.

It must be allowed, that every man is bound

to follow the rules and directions of that measure of reason which God hath given him; and indeed he cannot do otherwise, if he will be sincere, or act like a man. For instance: if I should be commanded by an angel from heaven to believe it is midnight at noon-day, yet I could not believe him. So, if I were directly told in scripture that three are one, and one is three, I could not conceive or believe it in the natural common sense of that expression, but must suppose that something dark or mystical was meant, which it pleased God to conceal from me and from all the world. Thus in the text, "There are Three that bear record," &c. Am I capable of knowing and defining, what union and what distinction there may be in the divine nature, which possibly may be hid from the angels themselves? Again, I see it plainly declared in scripture, that there is but one God; and yet I find our Saviour claiming the prerogative of God in knowing men's thoughts; in saying, "He and his Father are one;" and "before Abraham was, I am." I read, that the disciples worshipped him: that Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God:" and St John, chap. i. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." I read likewise, that the Holy Ghost bestowed the power of working miracles, and the gift of tongues, which, if rightly considered, is as great a miracle as any,—that a number of illiterate men should of a sudden be qualified to speak all the languages then known in the world—such as could be done by the inspiration of God alone. From these several texts it is plain, that God commands us to believe there is a union, and there is a distinction; but what that union, or what that distinction is, all mankind are equally ignorant, and must continue

so, at least till the day of judgment, without some new revelation.

But because I cannot conceive the nature of this union and distinction in the divine nature, am I therefore to reject them as absurd and impossible, as I would if any one told me that three men are one, and one man is three? We are told, that a man and his wife are one flesh; this I can comprehend the meaning of; yet, literally taken, it is a thing impossible. But the apostle tells us, "We see but in part, and we know but in part;" and yet we would comprehend all the secret ways and workings of God.

Therefore I shall again repeat the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is positively affirmed in scripture: that God is there expressed in three different names, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghost: that each of these is God, and that there is but one God. But this union and distinction are a mystery utterly unknown to mankind.

This is enough for any good Christian to believe on this great article, without ever inquiring any farther. And this can be contrary to no man's reason, although the knowledge of it is hid from him.

But there is another difficulty of great importance among those who quarrel with the doctrine of the Trinity, as well as with several other articles of Christianity; which is, that our religion abounds in mysteries, and these they are so bold as to revile as cant, imposture, and priestcraft. It is impossible for us to determine, for what reasons God thought fit to communicate some things to us in part, and leave some part a mystery: but so it is in fact, and so the holy scriptures tell us in several places. For instance: the resurrection and change of our bodies are called myste-

ries by St Paul; our Saviour's incarnation is another: the kingdom of God is called a mystery by our Saviour, to be only known to his disciples; so is faith and the word of God by St Paul. I omit many others. So that to declare against all mysteries, without distinction or exception, is to declare against the whole tenor of the New Testament.

There are two conditions, that may bring a mystery under suspicion. First, when it is not taught and commanded in holy writ; or, secondly, when the mystery turns to the advantage of those who preach it to others. Now, as to the first, it can never be said, that we preach mysteries without warrant from holy scripture, although I confess this of the Trinity may have sometimes been explained by human invention, which might perhaps better have been spared. As to the second, it will not be possible to charge the protestant priesthood with proposing any temporal advantage to themselves by broaching, or multiplying, or preaching of mysteries. Does this mystery of the Trinity, for instance, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, bring the least profit or power to the preachers? No; it is as great a mystery to themselves as it is to the meanest of their hearers; and may be rather a cause of humiliation, by putting their understanding, in that point, upon a level with the most ignorant of their flock. It is true, indeed, the Roman church hath very much enriched herself by trading in mysteries, for which they have not the least authority from scripture, and which were fitted only to advance their own temporal wealth and grandeur; such as transubstantiation, the worshipping of images, indulgences for sins, purgatory, and masses for the dead; with many more. But it is

the perpetual talent of those who have ill-will to our church, or a contempt for all religion, taken up by the wickedness of their lives, to charge us with the errors and corruptions of popery, which all protestants have thrown off near two hundred years: whereas those mysteries held by us, have no prospect of power, pomp, or wealth, but have been ever maintained by the universal body of true believers from the days of the apostles, and will be so to the resurrection; neither will the gates of hell prevail against them.

It may be thought, perhaps, a strange thing, that God should require us to believe mysteries, while the reason or manner of what we are to believe is above our comprehension, and wholly concealed from us: neither doth it appear at first sight, that the believing or not believing them doth concern either the glory of God, or contribute to the goodness or wickedness of our lives. But this is a great and dangerous mistake. We see what a mighty weight is laid upon faith, both in the Old and New Testament. In the former we read, how the faith of Abraham is praised, who could believe that God would raise from him a great nation, at the very time that he was commanded to sacrifice his only son, and despaired of any other issue: and this was to him a great mystery. Our Saviour is perpetually preaching faith to his disciples, or reproaching them with the want of it: and St Paul produceth numerous examples of the wonders done by faith. And all this is highly reasonable: for, faith is an entire dependence upon the truth, the power, the justice, and the mercy of God; which dependence will certainly incline us to obey him in all things. So that the great excellency of faith consists in the consequence it hath upon our actions: as,

if we depend upon the truth and wisdom of a man, we shall certainly be more disposed to follow his advice. Therefore let no man think that he can lead as good a moral life without faith as with it; for this reason, because he who hath no faith cannot, by the strength of his own reason or endeavours, so easily resist temptations, as the other, who depends upon God's assistance in the overcoming of his frailties, and is sure to be rewarded for ever in heaven for his victory over them. "Faith," says the apostle, "is the evidence of things not seen:" he means, that faith is a virtue, by which any thing commanded us by God to believe, appears evident and certain to us, although we do not see, nor can conceive it; because by faith we entirely depend upon the truth and power of God.

It is an old and true distinction, that things may be above our reason, without being contrary to it. Of this kind are the power, the nature, and the universal presence of God, with innumerable other points. How little do those who quarrel with mysteries know of the commonest actions of nature! The growth of an animal, of a plant, or of the smallest seed, is a mystery to the wisest among men. If an ignorant person were told, that a loadstone would draw iron at a distance, he might say it was a thing contrary to his reason, and could not believe before he saw it with his eyes.

The manner whereby the soul and body are united, and how they are distinguished, is wholly unaccountable to us. We see but one part, and yet we know we consist of two; and this is a mystery we cannot comprehend, any more than that of the Trinity.

From what hath been said, it is manifest, that God did never command us to believe, nor his ministers to preach, any doctrine which is contrary to the reason he hath pleased to endow us with ; but, for his own wise ends, has thought fit to conceal from us the nature of the thing he commands ; thereby to try our faith and obedience, and increase our dependence upon him.

It is highly probable, that if God should please to reveal unto us this great mystery of the Trinity, or some other mysteries in our holy religion, we should not be able to understand them, unless he would at the same time think fit to bestow on us some new powers or faculties of the mind, which we want at present, and are reserved till the day of resurrection to life eternal. “ For now,” as the apostle says, “ we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.”

Thus, we see, the matter is brought to this issue : we must either believe what God directly commands us in holy scripture, or we must wholly reject the scripture, and the Christian religion, which we pretend to profess. But this, I hope, is too desperate a step for any of us to make.

I have already observed, that those who preach up the belief of the Trinity, or of any other mystery, cannot propose any temporal advantage to themselves by so doing. But this is not the case of those who oppose these doctrines. Do they lead better moral lives than a good Christian ? are they more just in their dealings ? more chaste, or temperate, or charitable ? Nothing at all of this ; but, on the contrary, their intent is to overthrow all religion, that they may gratify their vices without any reproach from the world,

or their own conscience: and are zealous to bring over as many others as they can to their own opinions; because it is some kind of imaginary comfort to have a multitude on their side.

There is no miracle mentioned in holy writ, which, if it were strictly examined, is not as much contrary to common reason, and as much a mystery, as this doctrine of the Trinity; and therefore we may with equal justice deny the truth of them all. For instance: it is against the laws of nature, that a human body should be able to walk upon the water, as St Peter is recorded to have done; or that a dead carcass should be raised from the grave after three days, when it began to corrupt; which those who understand anatomy will pronounce to be impossible by the common rules of nature and reason. Yet these miracles, and many others, are positively affirmed in the gospel; and these we must believe, or give up our holy religion to atheists and infidels.

I shall now make a few inferences and observations upon what has been said.

First, It would be well, if people would not lay so much weight on their own reason in matters of religion, as to think every thing impossible and absurd which they cannot conceive. How often do we contradict the right rules of reason in the whole course of our lives? Reason itself is true and just, but the reason of every particular man is weak and wavering, perpetually swayed and turned by his interests, his passions, and his vices. Let any man but consider, when he hath a controversy with another, though his cause be ever so unjust, though the whole world be against him, how blinded he is by the love of himself, to believe that right is wrong, and wrong

is right, when it makes for his own advantage. Where is then the right use of his reason, which he so much boasts of, and which he would blasphemously set up to controul the commands of the Almighty?

Secondly, When men are tempted to deny the mysteries of religion, let them examine and search into their own hearts, whether they have not some favourite sin, which is of their party in this dispute, and which is equally contrary to other commands of God in the gospel. For, why do men love darkness rather than light? The scripture tells us, "Because their deeds are evil;" and there can be no other reason assigned. Therefore, when men are curious and inquisitive to discover some weak sides in Christianity, and inclined to favour every thing that is offered to its disadvantage, it is plain they wish it were not true; and those wishes can proceed from nothing but an evil conscience; because, if there be truth in our religion, their condition must be miserable.

And therefore, *thirdly*, Men should consider, that raising difficulties concerning the mysteries in religion, cannot make them more wise, learned, or virtuous; better neighbours, or friends, or more serviceable to their country; but, whatever they pretend, will destroy their inward peace of mind by perpetual doubts and fears arising in their breasts. And God forbid we should ever see the times so bad, when dangerous opinions in religion will be a means to get favour and preferment; although even in such a case, it would be an ill traffic to gain the world, and lose our own souls. So that upon the whole it will be impossible to find any real use toward a virtuous

or happy life, by denying the mysteries of the gospel.

Fourthly, Those strong unbelievers, who expect that all mysteries should be squared and fitted to their own reason, might have somewhat to say for themselves, if they could satisfy the general reason of mankind in their opinions; but herein they are miserably defective, absurd, and ridiculous; they strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel; they can believe that the world was made by chance; that God doth not concern himself with things below; will neither punish vice nor reward virtue; that religion was invented by cunning men to keep the world in awe; with many other opinions equally false and detestable, against the common light of nature as well as reason; against the universal sentiments of all civilized nations, and offensive to the ears even of a sober heathen.

Lastly, Since the world abounds with pestilent books particularly written against this doctrine of the Trinity, it is fit to inform you, that the authors of them proceed wholly upon a mistake: they would shew how impossible it is, that three can be one, and one can be three; whereas the scripture saith no such thing, at least in that manner they would make it: but only that there is some kind of unity and distinction in the divine nature, which mankind cannot possibly comprehend: thus the whole doctrine is short and plain, and in itself incapable of any controversy: since God himself hath pronounced the fact, but wholly concealed the manner. And therefore many divines, who thought fit to answer those wicked books, have been mistaken too by answering fools in their folly; and endeavouring to explain a mystery, which God intended to keep secret from

us. And as I would exhort all men to avoid reading those wicked books written against this doctrine, as dangerous and pernicious ; so I think they may omit the answers, as unnecessary. This, I confess, will probably affect but few or none among the generality of our congregations, who do not much trouble themselves with books, at least of this kind. However, many, who do not read themselves, are seduced by others that do, and thus become unbelievers upon trust and at second-hand ; and this is too frequent a case : for which reason, I have endeavoured to put this doctrine upon a short and sure foot, levelled to the meanest understanding ; by which we may, as the apostle directs, be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.

And thus I have done with my subject, which probably I should not have chosen, if I had not been invited to it by the occasion of this season, appointed on purpose to celebrate the mysteries of the Trinity, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, wherein we pray to be kept stedfast in this faith ; and what this faith is I have shewn you in the plainest manner I could. For, upon the whole, it is no more than this : God commands us, by our dependence upon his truth, and his holy word, to believe a fact that we do not understand. And this is no more than what we do every day in the works of nature, upon the credit of men of learning. Without faith we can do no works acceptable to God ; for if they proceed from any other principle, they will not advance our salvation ; and this faith, as I have explained it, we may acquire without giving up our senses, or contradicting our reason. May God of his infinite mercy inspire us with true faith in every article and

mystery of our religion, so as to dispose us to do what is pleasing in his sight; and this we pray through Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the mysterious incomprehensible One God, be all honour and glory now and for evermore! *Amen.*

SERMON III.

ON

MUTUAL SUBJECTION.*

FIRST PRINTED IN 1744.

I PETER, V. 5.

—*Yea, all of you be subject one to another.*

THE Apostle having, in many parts of this epistle, given directions to Christians concerning the duty of subjection or obedience to superiors; in the several instances of the subject to the prince, the child to his parent, the servant to his master, the wife to her husband, and the younger to the elder; doth here, in the words of my text, sum up the whole, by advancing a point of doctrine, which at first may appear a little extraordinary; “Yea, all of you,” saith he, “be subject one to another.” For it should seem, that two persons

* “A clearer style, or a discourse more properly adapted to a public audience, can scarce be framed. Every paragraph is simple, nervous, and intelligible. The threads of each argument are closely connected, and logically pursued.”—*Orrery*.

cannot properly be said to be subject to each other, and that subjection is only due from inferiors to those above them: yet St Paul hath several passages to the same purpose. For he exhorts the Romans, "in honour to prefer one another;" and the Philippians, "that in lowliness of mind they should each esteem other better than themselves;" and the Ephesians, "that they should submit themselves one to another in the fear of the Lord." Here we find these two great apostles recommending to all Christians this duty of mutual subjection. For we may observe, by St Peter, that having mentioned the several relations which men bear to each other, as governor and subject, master and servant, and the rest which I have already repeated, he makes no exception, but sums up the whole with commanding "all to be subject one to another." Whence we may conclude, that this subjection due from all men to all men, is something more than the compliment of course, when our betters are pleased to tell us they are our humble servants, but understand us to be their slaves.

I know very well, that some of those who explain this text apply it to humility, to the duties of charity, to private exhortations, and to bearing with each other's infirmities; and it is probable the apostle may have had a regard to all these. But, however, many learned men agree, that there is something more understood, and so the words in their plain natural meaning must import; as you will observe yourselves, if you read them with the beginning of the verse, which is thus: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you be subject one to another." So that, upon the whole, there must be some kind of subjection due from every man to

every man, which cannot be made void by any power, pre-eminence, or authority whatsoever. Now what sort of subjection this is, and how it ought to be paid, shall be the subject of my present discourse.

As God hath contrived all the works of nature to be useful, and in some manner a support to each other, by which the whole frame of the world, under his providence, is preserved and kept up; so among mankind our particular stations are appointed to each of us by God Almighty, wherein we are obliged to act, as far as our power reacheth, toward the good of the whole community. And he who doth not perform that part assigned him toward advancing the benefit of the whole, in proportion to his opportunities and abilities, is not only a useless, but a very mischievous member of the public; because he takes his share of the profit, and yet leaves his share of the burden to be borne by others, which is the true principal cause of most miseries and misfortunes in life. For a wise man, who does not assist with his counsels; a great man, with his protection; a rich man, with his bounty and charity; and a poor man, with his labour; are perfect nuisances in a commonwealth. Neither is any condition of life more honourable in the sight of God than another; otherwise he would be a respecter of persons, which he assures us he is not: for he hath proposed the same salvation to all men, and hath only placed them in different ways or stations to work it out. Princes are born with no more advantages of strength or wisdom than other men; and, by an unhappy education, are usually more defective in both than thousands of their subjects. They depend for every necessary of life upon the meanest of

their people : besides, obedience and subjection were never enjoined by God to humour the passions, lusts, and vanities, of those who demand them from us ; but we are commanded to obey our governors, because disobedience would breed seditions in the state. Thus servants are directed to obey their masters, children their parents, and wives their husbands ; not from any respect of persons in God, but because otherwise there would be nothing but confusion in private families. This matter will be clearly explained, by considering the comparison which St Paul makes between the church of Christ and the body of man : for the same resemblance will hold, not only to families and kingdoms, but to the whole corporation of mankind. “ The eye,” saith he, “ cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee : nor again the hand to the foot, I have no need of thee. Nay, much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary : and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” The case is directly the same among mankind. The prince cannot say to the merchant, I have no need of thee ; nor the merchant to the labourer, I have no need of thee. Nay, much more, those members which seem to be more feeble are necessary ; for the poor are generally more necessary members of the commonwealth than the rich : which clearly shows, that God never intended such possessions for the sake and service of those to whom he lends them ; but because he hath assigned every man his particular station to be useful in life, and this for the reason given by the apostle, “ that there may be no schism in the body.”

From hence may partly be gathered the nature of that subjection, which we all owe to one another. God Almighty hath been pleased to put us into an imperfect state, where we have perpetual occasion of each other's assistance. There is none so low, as not to be in a capacity of assisting the highest; nor so high, as not to want the assistance of the lowest.

It plainly appears, from what hath been said, that no one human creature is more worthy than another in the sight of God, farther than according to the goodness or holiness of their lives; and that power, wealth, and the like outward advantages, are so far from being the marks of God's approving or preferring those on whom they are bestowed, that, on the contrary, he is pleased to suffer them to be almost engrossed by those who have least title to his favour. Now, according to this equality wherein God hath placed all mankind with relation to himself, you will observe, that in all the relations between man and man, there is a mutual dependence, whereby the one cannot subsist without the other. Thus, no man can be a prince without subjects, nor a master without servants, nor a father without children. And this both explains and confirms the doctrine of the text: for where there is a mutual dependence there must be a mutual duty, and consequently a mutual subjection. For instance, the subject must obey his prince, because God commands it, human laws require it, and the safety of the public makes it necessary; for the same reasons we must obey all that are in authority, and submit ourselves not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, whether they rule according to our liking or not. On the other side, in those countries that pretend to freedom,

princes are subject to those laws which their people have chosen ; they are bound to protect their subjects in liberty, property, and religion, to receive their petitions, and redress their grievances ; so that the best prince is, in the opinion of wise men, only the greatest servant of the nation ; not only a servant to the public in general, but in some sort to every man in it. In the like manner, a servant owes obedience, and diligence, and faithfulness to his master ; from whom, at the same time, he hath a just demand for protection, and maintenance, and gentle treatment. Nay, even the poor beggar hath a just demand of an alms from the rich man ; who is guilty of fraud, injustice, and oppression, if he does not afford relief according to his abilities.

But this subjection we all owe one another, is no where more necessary than in the common conversations of life ; for without it there could be no society among men. If the learned would not sometimes submit to the ignorant, the wise to the simple, the gentle to the froward, the old to the weaknesses of the young, there would be nothing but everlasting variance in the world. This our Saviour himself confirmed by his own example ; for he appeared in the form of a servant, and washed his disciples' feet, adding those memorable words : " Ye call me Lord and Master, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, wash your feet, how much more ought ye to wash one another's feet ?" Under which expression of washing the feet is included all that subjection, assistance, love, and duty, which every good Christian ought to pay his brother, in whatever station God hath placed him. For the greatest prince and the meanest slave, are not, by infinite degrees, so distant, as

our Saviour and those disciples, whose feet he vouchsafed to wash.

And although this doctrine of subjecting ourselves to one another may seem to grate upon the pride and vanity of mankind, and may therefore be hard to be digested by those who value themselves upon their greatness or their wealth, yet it is really no more than what most men practise upon other occasions. For if our neighbour, who is our inferior, comes to see us, we rise to receive him, we place him above us, and respect him as if he were better than ourselves: and this is thought both decent and necessary, and is usually called good manners. Now the duty required by the apostle, is only that we should enlarge our minds, and that what we thus practise in the common course of life, we should imitate in all our actions and proceedings whatsoever; since our Saviour tells us that every man is our neighbour, and since we are so ready, in the points of civility, to yield to others, in our own houses, where only we have any title to govern.

Having thus shown you what sort of subjection it is, which all men owe to another, and in what manner it ought to be paid, I shall now draw some observations from what hath been said.

And, *first*; A thorough practice of this duty of subjecting ourselves to the wants and infirmities of each other, would utterly extinguish in us the vice of pride.

For, if God has pleased to entrust me with a talent, not for my own sake, but for the service of others, and at the same time hath left me full of wants and necessities, which others must supply, I can then have no cause to set any extraordinary value upon myself, or to despise my brother,

because he hath not the same talents which were lent to me. His being may probably be as useful to the public as mine; and, therefore, by the rules of right reason, I am in no sort preferable to him.

Secondly; 'Tis very manifest, from what has been said, that no man ought to look upon the advantages of life, such as riches, honour, power, and the like, as his property, but merely as a trust, which God hath deposited with him to be employed for the use of his brethren; and God will certainly punish the breach of that trust, though the laws of man will not, or rather indeed cannot, because the trust was conferred only by God, who has not left it to any power on earth to decide infallibly, whether a man makes a good use of his talents or not, or to punish him where he fails. And therefore God seems to have more particularly taken this matter into his own hands, and will most certainly reward, or punish us, in proportion to our good or ill performance in it. Now although the advantages, which one possesseth more than another, may in some sense be called his property with respect to other men, yet with respect to God they are, as I said, only a trust; which will plainly appear from hence: if a man does not use those advantages to the good of the public, or the benefit of his neighbour, it is certain he doth not deserve them, and consequently that God never intended them for a blessing to him; and, on the other side, whoever does employ his talents as he ought, will find by his own experience, that they were chiefly lent him for the service of others; for to the service of others he will certainly employ them.

Thirdly; If we could all be brought to practise this duty of subjecting ourselves to each other

it would very much contribute to the general happiness of mankind: for this would root out envy and malice from the heart of man; because you cannot envy your neighbour's strength, if he make use of it to defend your life, or carry your burden; you cannot envy his wisdom, if he gives you good counsel; nor his riches, if he supplies you in your wants; nor his greatness, if he employs it to your protection. The miseries of life are not properly owing to the unequal distribution of things; but God Almighty, the great King of Heaven, is treated like the kings of the earth, who, although perhaps, intending well themselves, have often most abominable ministers and stewards, and those generally the vilest to whom they entrust the most talents. But here is the difference, that the princes of this world see by other men's eyes, but God sees all things; and therefore, whenever he permits his blessings to be dealt among those who are unworthy, we may certainly conclude that he intends them only as a punishment to an evil world, as well as to the owners. It were well, if those would consider this, whose riches serve them only as a spur to avarice, or as an instrument of their lusts; whose wisdom is only of this world, to put false colours upon things, to call good evil and evil good, against the conviction of their own consciences; and lastly, who employ their power and favour in acts of oppression or injustice, in misrepresenting persons and things, or in countenancing the wicked, to the ruin of the innocent.

Fourthly. The practice of this duty of being subject to one another, would make us rest contented in the several stations of life wherein God hath thought fit to place us; because it would,

in the best and easiest manner, bring us back as it were to that early state of the gospel, when Christians had all things in common. For, if the poor found the rich disposed to supply their wants; if the ignorant found the wise ready to instruct and direct them; or if the weak might always find protection from the mighty; they could none of them, with the least pretence of justice, lament their own condition.

From all that hath been hitherto said, it appears, that great abilities of any sort, when they are employed as God directs, do but make the owners of them greater and more painful servants to their neighbour and the public: however, we are by no means to conclude from hence, that they are not really blessings, when they are in the hands of good men. For, first, what can be a greater honour than to be chosen one of the stewards and dispensers of God's bounty to mankind? What is there that can give a generous spirit more pleasure and complacency of mind, than to consider, that he is an instrument of doing much good? that great numbers owe to him, under God, their subsistence, their safety, their health, and the good conduct of their lives? The wickedest man upon earth takes a pleasure in doing good to those he loves; and therefore surely a good Christian, who obeys our Saviour's commands of loving all men, cannot but take delight in doing good even to his enemies. God, who gives all things to all men, can receive nothing from any; and those among men, who do the most good, and receive the fewest returns, do most resemble the Creator: for which reason St Paul delivers it as a saying of our Saviour, that "it is more blessed to give than receive." By this rule, what must become of those things, which the

world values as the greatest blessings—riches, power, and the like—when our Saviour plainly determines, that the best way to make them blessings is to part with them? Therefore, although the advantages, which one man hath over another, may be called blessings, yet they are by no means so in the sense the world usually understands. Thus, for example, great riches are no blessings in themselves; because the poor man, with the common necessaries of life, enjoys more health, and has fewer cares without them. How then do they become blessings? No otherwise than by being employed in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, rewarding worthy men, and, in short, doing acts of charity and generosity. Thus, likewise, power is no blessing in itself, because private men bear less envy, and trouble, and anguish, without it. But when it is employed to protect the innocent, to relieve the oppressed, and to punish the oppressor, then it becomes a great blessing.

And so, lastly, even great wisdom is, in the opinion of Solomon, not a blessing in itself: for “in much wisdom is much sorrow;” and men of common understanding, if they serve God and mind their callings, make fewer mistakes in the conduct of life than those who have better heads. And yet wisdom is a mighty blessing, when it is applied to good purposes, to instruct the ignorant, to be a faithful counsellor either in public or private, to be a director to youth, and to many other ends needless here to mention.

To conclude: God sent us into the world to obey his commands, by doing as much good as our abilities will reach, and as little evil as our many infirmities will permit. Some he hath only trusted with one talent, some with five, and some

with ten. No man is without his talent; and he that is faithful or negligent in a little, shall be rewarded or punished, as well as he that hath been so in a great deal.

Consider what hath been said, &c.

SERMON IV.

ON

THE TESTIMONY OF CONSCIENCE.

FIRST PRINTED IN 1744.

2 CORINTHIANS, i. 12.

—For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.

THERE is no word more frequently in the mouths of men than that of conscience, and the meaning of it is in some measure generally understood: however, because it is likewise a word extremely abused by many people, who apply other meanings to it, which God Almighty never intended; I shall explain it to you in the clearest manner I am able. The word conscience properly signifies that knowledge, which a man hath within himself of his own thoughts and actions. And because if a man judgeth fairly of his own actions, by comparing them with the law of God, his mind will either approve or condemn him, according as he hath done good or evil; therefore this knowledge or conscience may properly be called both an ac-

cuser and a judge. So that whenever our conscience accuseth us, we are certainly guilty; but we are not always innocent, when it doth not accuse us: for very often, through the hardness of our hearts, or the fondness and favour we bear to ourselves, or through ignorance or neglect, we do not suffer our conscience to take any cognizance of several sins we commit. There is another office likewise belonging to conscience, which is that of being our director and guide; and the wrong use of this hath been the occasion of more evils under the sun than almost all other causes put together. For, as conscience is nothing else but the knowledge we have of what we are thinking and doing; so it can guide us no farther than that knowledge reacheth: and therefore God hath placed conscience in us to be our director only in those actions which Scripture and reason plainly tell us to be good or evil. But in cases too difficult or doubtful for us to comprehend or determine, there conscience is not concerned; because it cannot advise in what it doth not understand, nor decide where it is itself in doubt: but, by God's great mercy, those difficult points are never of absolute necessity to our salvation. There is likewise another evil, that men often say a thing is against their conscience, when really it is not. For instance: ask any of those who differ from the worship established, why they do not come to church: they will say, they dislike the ceremonies, the prayers, the habits, and the like; and therefore it goes against their conscience. But they are mistaken, their teacher hath put those words into their mouth; for a man's conscience can go no higher than his knowledge; and therefore till he has thoroughly examined by scripture,

and the practice of the ancient church, whether those points are blameable or not, his conscience cannot possibly direct him to condemn them. Hence have likewise arisen those mistakes about what is usually called liberty of conscience; which, properly speaking, is no more than a liberty of knowing our own thoughts, which liberty no one can take from us. But those words have obtained quite different meanings: liberty of conscience is now-a-days not only understood to be the liberty of believing what men please, but also of endeavouring to propagate that belief as much as they can, and to overthrow the faith which the laws have already established, and to be rewarded by the public for those wicked endeavours: and this is the liberty of conscience which the fanatics are now openly in the face of the world endeavouring at with their utmost application. At the same time it cannot but be observed, that those very persons, who, under pretence of a public spirit and tenderness toward their Christian brethren, are so zealous for such a liberty of conscience as this, are of all others the least tender to those who differ from them in the smallest point relating to government; and I wish I could not say, that the Majesty of the living God may be offended with more security than the memory of a dead prince. But the wisdom of the world at present seems to agree with that of the heathen emperor, who said, if the gods were offended, it was their own concern, and they were able to vindicate themselves.

But, although conscience hath been abused to those wicked purposes which I have already related, yet a due regard to the directions it plainly gives us, as well as to its accusations, reproaches,

and advices, would be of the greatest use to mankind, both for their present welfare, and future happiness.

Therefore, my discourse at this time shall be directed to prove to you, that there is no solid, firm foundation for virtue, but on a conscience which is guided by religion.

In order to this, I shall first show you the weakness and uncertainty of two false principles, which many people set up in the place of conscience, for a guide to their actions.

The first of these principles is, what the world usually calls moral honesty. There are some people, who appear very indifferent as to religion, and yet have the repute of being just and fair in their dealings; and these are generally known by the character of good moral men. But now, if you look into the grounds and motives of such a man's actions, you shall find them to be no other than his own ease and interest. For example: you trust a moral man with your money in the way of trade, you trust another with the defence of your cause at law, and perhaps they both deal justly with you. Why? not from any regard they have for justice, but because their fortune depends upon their credit, and a stain of open public dishonesty must be to their disadvantage. But let it consist with such a man's interest and safety to wrong you, and then it will be impossible you can have any hold upon him; because there is nothing left to give him a check, or put in the balance against his profit. For if he hath nothing to govern himself by but the opinion of the world, as long as he can conceal his injustice from the world, he thinks he is safe.

Besides, it is found by experience, that those

men who set up for morality without regard to religion, are generally virtuous but in part; they will be just in their dealings between man and man; but if they find themselves disposed to pride, lust, intemperance, or avarice, they do not think their morality concerned to check them in any of these vices; because it is the great rule of such men, that they may lawfully follow the dictates of nature, wherever their safety, health, and fortune are not injured. So that upon the whole there is hardly one vice, which a mere moral man may not, upon some occasions, allow himself to practise.

The other false principle, which some men set up in the place of conscience, to be their director in life, is what those who pretend to it call honour.

This word is often made the sanction of an oath; it is reckoned to be a great commendation to be a strict man of honour; and it is commonly understood that a man of honour can never be guilty of a base action. This is usually the style of military men, of persons with titles, and of others who pretend to birth and quality. 'Tis true, indeed, that in ancient times it was universally understood, that honour was the reward of virtue; but if such honour as is now-a-days going will not permit a man to do a base action, it must be allowed there are few such things as base actions in nature. No man of honour, as that word is usually understood, did ever pretend that his honour obliged him to be chaste or temperate, to pay his creditors, to be useful to his country, to do good to mankind, to endeavour to be wise, or learned, to regard his word, his promise, or his oath: or, if he hath any of these virtues, they

were never learned in the catechism of honour; which contains but two precepts, the punctual payment of debts contracted at play, and the right understanding the several degrees of an affront, in order to revenge it by the death of an adversary.

But suppose this principle of honour, which some men so much boast of, did really produce more virtue than it ever pretended to do; yet, since the very being of that honour depended upon the breath, the opinion, or the fancy of the people, the virtues derived from it could be of no long or certain duration. For example: suppose a man, from a principle of honour, should resolve to be just, or chaste, or temperate, and yet the censuring world should take a humour of refusing him those characters, he would then think the obligation at an end. Or, on the other side, if he thought he could gain honour by the falsest and vilest action (which is a case that very often happens), he would then make no scruple to perform it. And God knows, it would be an unhappy state, to have the religion, the liberty, or the property of a people lodged in such hands: which however, hath been too often the case

What I have said upon this principle of honour may perhaps be thought of small concernment to most of you, who are my hearers: however, a caution was not altogether unnecessary; since there is nothing by which not only the vulgar, but the honest tradesman, has been so much deceived, as this infamous pretence to honour in too many of their betters.

Having thus shown you the weakness and uncertainty of those principles, which some men set in the place of conscience, to direct them in their

actions; I shall now endeavour to prove to you, that there is no solid, firm foundation of virtue, but in a conscience directed by the principles of religion.

There is no way of judging how far we may depend upon the actions of men, otherwise than by knowing the motives, and grounds, and causes of them; and if the motives of our actions be not resolved and determined into the law of God, they will be precarious and uncertain, and liable to perpetual changes. I will show you what I mean, by an example: suppose a man thinks it his duty to obey his parents, because reason tells him so, because he is obliged by gratitude, and because the laws of his country command him to do so; if he stops here, his parents can have no lasting security; for an occasion may happen, wherein it may be extremely his interest to be disobedient, and where the laws of the land can lay no hold upon him: therefore, before such a man can safely be trusted, he must proceed farther, and consider, that his reason is the gift of God; that God commanded him to be obedient to the laws, and did moreover in a particular manner enjoin him to be dutiful to his parents; after which, if he lays due weight upon those considerations, he will probably continue in his duty to the end of his life: because no earthly interest can ever come in competition to balance the danger of offending his Creator, or the happiness of pleasing him. And of all this his conscience will certainly inform him, if he hath any regard to religion.

Secondly; Fear and hope are the two greatest natural motives of all men's actions: but neither of these passions will ever put us in the way of

virtue, unless they be directed by conscience. For, although virtuous men do sometimes accidentally make their way to preferment, yet the world is so corrupted, that no man can reasonably hope to be rewarded in it merely upon account of his virtue. And consequently the fear of punishment in this life will preserve men from very few vices, since some of the blackest and basest do often prove the surest steps to favour; such as ingratitude, hypocrisy, treachery, malice, subornation, atheism, and many more, which human laws do little concern themselves about. But, when conscience placeth before us the hopes of everlasting happiness, and the fears of everlasting misery, as the reward and punishment of our good or evil actions; our reason can find no way to avoid the force of such an argument, otherwise than by running into infidelity.

Lastly; Conscience will direct us to love God, and to put our whole trust and confidence in him. Our love of God will inspire us with a detestation for sin, as what is of all things most contrary to his divine nature: and if we have an entire confidence in him, that will enable us to subdue and despise all the allurements of the world.

It may here be objected, if conscience be so sure a director to us Christians in the conduct of our lives, how comes it to pass that the ancient heathens, who had no other lights but those of nature and reason, should so far exceed us in all manner of virtue, as plainly appears by many examples they have left on record?

To which it may be answered; first, those heathens were extremely strict and exact in the education of their children; whereas among us this care is so much laid aside, that the more God

has blessed any man with estate or quality, just so much the less in proportion is the care he takes in the education of his children, and particularly of that child which is to inherit his fortune: of which the effects are visible enough among the great ones of the world. Again, those heathens did in a particular manner instil the principle into their children of loving their country; which is so far otherwise now-a-days, that of the several parties among us, there is none of them that seem to have so much as heard whether there be such a virtue in the world, as plainly appears by their practices; and especially when they are placed in those stations where they can only have opportunity of showing it. Lastly; the most considerable among the heathens did generally believe rewards and punishments in a life to come; which is the great principle for conscience to work upon: whereas too many of those, who would be thought the most considerable among us, do, both by their practices and their discourses, plainly affirm, that they believe nothing at all of the matter.

Wherefore, since it hath manifestly appeared that a religious conscience is the only true solid foundation upon which virtue can be built, give me leave, before I conclude, to let you see how necessary such a conscience is, to conduct us in every station and condition of our lives.

That a religious conscience is necessary in any station, is confessed even by those who tell us that all religion was invented by cunning men, in order to keep the world in awe. For, if religion, by the confession of its adversaries, be necessary toward the well-governing of mankind; then every wise man in power will be sure, not only to

choose out for every station under him such persons as are most likely to be kept in awe by religion, but likewise to carry some appearance of it himself, or else he is a very weak politician. And accordingly, in any country where great persons affect to be open despisers of religion, their counsels will be found at last to be fully as destructive to the state as to the church.

It was the advice of Jethro to his son-in-law Moses, to "provide able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness," and to place such over the people; and Moses, who was as wise a statesman at least as any in this age, thought fit to follow that advice. Great abilities, without the fear of God, are most dangerous instruments, when they are trusted with power. The laws of man have thought fit, that those who are called to any office of trust, should be bound by an oath to the faithful discharge of it; but an oath is an appeal to God, and therefore can have no influence, except upon those who believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that seek him, and a punisher of those who disobey him: and therefore, we see, the laws themselves are forced to have recourse to conscience in these cases, because their penalties cannot reach the arts of cunning men, who can find ways to be guilty of a thousand injustices without being discovered, or at least without being punished. And the reason why we find so many frauds, abuses, and corruptions where any trust is conferred, can be no other, than that there is so little conscience and religion left in the world; or at least that men, in their choice of instruments, have private ends in view, which are very different from the service of the public. Besides, it is certain, that

men who profess to have no religion, are full as zealous to bring over proselytes, as any papist or fanatic can be. And therefore, if those who are in station high enough to be of influence or example to others; if those (I say) openly profess a contempt or disbelief of religion, they will be sure to make all their dependants of their own principles; and what security can the public expect from such persons, whenever their interests, or their lusts, come into competition with their duty? It is very possible for a man, who hath the appearance of religion, and is a great pretender to conscience, to be wicked and a hypocrite; but it is impossible for a man, who openly declares against religion, to give any reasonable security that he will not be false, and cruel, and corrupt, whenever a temptation offers which he values more than he does the power wherewith he was trusted. And if such a man doth not betray his cause and his master, it is only because the temptation was not properly offered, or the profit was too small, or the danger was too great. And hence it is, that we find so little truth or justice among us: because there are so very few, who, either in the service of the public, or in common dealings with each other, do ever look farther than their own advantage, and how to guard themselves against the laws of the country; which a man may do by favour, by secrecy, or by cunning, though he breaks almost every law of God. Therefore, to conclude: It plainly appears, that unless men are guided by the advice and judgment of conscience founded on religion, they can give no security that they will be either good subjects, faithful servants of the public, or honest in their mutual dealings; since there is no other tie,

through which the pride, or lust, or avarice, or ambition of mankind, will not certainly break one time or other.

Consider what has been said, &c.

SERMON V.
ON
BROTHERLY LOVE.

HEB. xxiii. 1.

*Let brotherly love continue.**

IN the early times of the gospel, the Christians were very much distinguished from all other bodies of men, by the great and constant love they bore to each other; which, although it was done in obedience to the frequent injunctions of our Saviour and his apostles, yet, I confess, there seemeth to have been likewise a natural reason, that very much promoted it. For the Christians then were few and scattered, living under persecution by the heathens round about them, in whose hands was all the civil and military power;

* Notwithstanding the text and title of this sermon, and the many excellent observations which it contains in illustration of both, there are several passages in it which the dissenters of the time would hardly consider as propitiatory towards the continuance of brotherly love. There are also various allusions to the parties which raged at the time, and some which appear to have been written in defence of the preacher's character, then severely arraigned by the Irish Whigs, and held in abhorrence by the people of Dublin, by whom he was afterwards idolized.

and there is nothing so apt to unite the minds and hearts of men, or to beget love and tenderness, as a general distress. The first dissensions between Christians took their beginning from the errors and heresies that arose among them; many of those heresies, sometimes extinguished, and sometimes reviving, or succeeded by others, remain to this day; and having been made many instruments to the pride, avarice, or ambition of ill-designing men, by extinguishing brotherly love, have been the cause of infinite calamities, as well as corruptions of faith and manners, in the Christian world.

The last legacy of Christ was peace and mutual love; but then he foretold, that he came to send a sword upon the earth: the primitive Christians accepted the legacy, and their successors down to the present age have been largely fulfilling his prophecy. But whatever the practice of mankind hath been, or still continues, there is no duty more incumbent upon those who profess the gospel, than that of brotherly love; which, whoever could restore in any degree among men, would be an instrument of more good to human society, than ever was or will be done by all the statesmen and politicians in the world.

It is upon this subject of brotherly love, that I intend to discourse at present; and the method I observe shall be as follows:

- I. *First*, I will inquire into the causes of this great want of brotherly love among us.
- II. *Secondly*, I will lay open the sad effects and consequences, which our animosities and mutual hatred have produced.
- III. *Lastly*, I will use some motives and exhortations, that may persuade you to embrace brotherly love, and continue in it.

I. *First*, I shall inquire into the causes of this great want of brotherly love among us.

This nation of ours hath, for a hundred years past, been infested by two enemies, the papists and fanatics; who, each in their turns, filled it with blood and slaughter, and, for a time, destroyed both the church and government. The memory of these events hath put all true protestants equally upon their guard against both these adversaries, who, by consequence, do equally hate us. The fanatics revile us, as too nearly approaching to popery; and the papists condemn us, as bordering too much on fanaticism. The papists, God be praised, are, by the wisdom of our laws, put out of all visible possibility of hurting us; besides their religion is so generally abhorred, that they have no advocates or abettors among protestants to assist them. But the fanatics are to be considered in another light; they have had of late years the power, the luck, or the cunning, to divide us among ourselves; they have endeavoured to represent all those who have been so bold as to oppose their errors and designs, under the character of persons disaffected to the government; and they have so far succeeded, that now-a-days, if a clergyman happens to preach with any zeal and vehemence against the sin and danger of schism, there will not want too many, in his congregation, ready enough to censure him as hot and high-flying, an inflamer of men's minds, an enemy to moderation, and disloyal to his prince. This hath produced a formed and settled division between those who profess the same doctrine and discipline; while they who call themselves moderate, are forced to widen their bottom, by sacrificing their principles and their brethren to the encroachments and insolence of dissenters;

who are therefore answerable, as a principal cause of all that hatred and animosity now reigning among us.

Another cause of the great want of brotherly love is, the weakness and folly of too many among you of the lower sort, who are made the tools and instruments of your betters to work their designs, wherein you have no concern. Your numbers make you of use, and cunning men take the advantage, by putting words into your mouths which you do not understand; then they fix good or ill characters to those words, as it best serves their purposes: and thus you are taught to love or hate, you know not what or why; you often suspect your best friends, and nearest neighbours, even your teacher himself, without any reason, if your leaders once taught you to call him by a name which they tell you signifieth some very bad thing.

A third cause of our great want of brotherly love seemeth to be, that this duty is not so often insisted on from the pulpit, as it ought to be in such times as these; on the contrary, it is to be doubted, whether doctrines are not sometimes delivered by an ungoverned zeal, a desire to be distinguished, or a view of interest, which produce quite different effects; when upon occasions set apart to return thanks to God for some public blessing, the time is employed in stirring up one part of the congregation against the other, by representations of things and persons, which God, in his mercy, forgive those who are guilty of.

The last cause I shall mention of the want of brotherly love is, that unhappy disposition towards politics among the trading people, which hath been industriously instilled into them. In

former times the middle and lower sort of mankind seldom gained or lost by the factions of the kingdom, and therefore were little concerned in them, farther than as matter of talk and amusement: but now the meanest dealer will expect to turn the penny, by the merits of his party. He can represent his neighbour as a man of dangerous principles, can bring a railing accusation against him, perhaps a criminal one; and so rob him of his livelihood, and find his own account by that, much more than if he had disparaged his neighbour's goods, or defamed him as a cheat. For so it happens, that instead of inquiring into the skill or honesty of those kind of people, the manner is now to inquire into their party, and to reject or encourage them accordingly; which proceeding hath made our people, in general, such able politicians, that all the artifice, flattery, dissimulation, diligence, and dexterity, in undermining each other, which the satirical wit of men hath charged upon courts; together with all the rage and violence, cruelty and injustice, which have been ever imputed to public assemblies; are with us (so polite are we grown) to be seen among our meanest traders and artificers in the greatest perfection. All which, as it may be matter of some humiliation to the wise and mighty of this world, so the effects thereof may perhaps, in time, prove very different from what, I hope, in charity, were ever foreseen or intended.

II. I will therefore now, in the second place, lay open some of the sad effects and consequences which our animosities and mutual hatred have produced.

And the first ill consequence is, that our want of brotherly love hath almost driven out all sense of religion from among us, which cannot well be otherwise; for, since our Saviour laid so much weight upon his disciples loving one another, that he gave it among his last instructions; and since the primitive Christians are allowed to have chiefly propagated the faith by their strict observance of that instruction; it must follow, that in proportion as brotherly love declineth, Christianity will do so too. The little religion there is in the world hath been observed to reside chiefly among the middle and lower sorts of people, who are neither tempted to pride nor luxury by great riches, nor to desperate courses by extreme poverty; and truly I, upon that account, have thought it a happiness that those who are under my immediate care are generally of that condition: but where party hath once made entrance, with all its consequences of hatred, envy, partiality, and virulence, religion cannot long keep its hold in any state or degree of life whatsoever. For, if the great men of the world have been censured in all ages for mingling too little religion with their politics, what a havock of principles must they needs make in unlearned and irregular heads; of which, indeed, the effects are already too visible and melancholy all over the kingdom?

Another ill consequence from our want of brotherly love is, that it increaseth the insolence of the fanatics; and this partly ariseth from a mistaken meaning of the word moderation; a word which hath been much abused, and bandied about for several years past. There are too many people indifferent enough to all religion; there are many others, who dislike the clergy, and would

have them live in poverty and dependence: both these sorts are much commended by the fanatics for moderate men, ready to put an end to our divisions, and to make a general union among protestants. Many ignorant well-meaning people are deceived by these appearances, strengthened with great pretences to loyalty; and these occasions the fanatics lay hold on to revile the doctrine and discipline of the church, and even insult and oppress the clergy wherever their numbers or favourers will bear them out; insomuch that one wilful refractory fanatic hath been able to disturb a whole parish for many years together. But the most moderate and favoured divines dare not own that the word moderation, with respect to the dissenters, can be at all applied to their religion, but is purely personal or prudential. No good man repineth at the liberty of conscience they enjoy; and perhaps a very moderate divine may think better of their loyalty than others do; or, to speak after the manner of men, may think it necessary that all protestants should be united against the common enemy; or out of discretion, or other reasons best known to himself, be tender of mentioning them at all. But still the errors of the dissenters are all fixed and determined, and must, upon demand, be acknowledged by all the divines of our church, whether they be called, in party phrase, high or low, moderate or violent. And further, I believe it would be hard to find many moderate divines, who, if their opinion were asked whether dissenters should be trusted with power, could, according to their consciences, answer in the affirmative; from whence it is plain, that all the stir which the fanatics have made with this word moderation, was only meant to increase our divi-

sions, and widen them so far as to make room for themselves to get in between. And this is the only scheme they ever had (except that of destroying root and branch) for the uniting of protestants, they so much talk of.

I shall mention but one ill consequence more, which attends our want of brotherly love; that it hath put an end to all hospitality and friendship, all good correspondence and commerce between mankind. There are indeed such things as leagues and confederacies among those of the same party; but surely God never intended that men should be so limited in the choice of their friends: however, so it is in town and country, in every parish and street; the pastor is divided from his flock, the father from his son, and the house often divided against itself. Men's very natures are soured, and their passions inflamed, when they meet in party clubs, and spend their time in nothing else but railing at the opposite side: thus every man alive among us is encompassed with a million of enemies of his own country, among which his oldest acquaintance and friends, and kindred themselves, are often of the number; neither can people of different parties mix together without constraint, suspicion, or jealousy, watching every word they speak, for fear of giving offence; or else falling into rudeness and reproaches, and so leaving themselves open to the malice and corruption of informers, who were never more numerous or expert in their trade. And as a farther addition to this evil, those very few, who, by the goodness and generosity of their nature, do in their own hearts despise this narrow principle of confining their friendship and esteem, their charity and good offices, to those of their own party, yet dare not discover their

good inclinations, for fear of losing their favour and interest. And others again, whom God had formed with mild and gentle dispositions, think it necessary to put a force upon their own tempers, by acting a noisy, violent, malicious part, as a means to be distinguished. Thus hath party got the better of the very genius and constitution of our people; so that, whoever reads the character of the English in former ages, will hardly believe their present posterity to be of the same nation or climate.

III. I shall now, in the last place, make use of some motives and exhortations, that may persuade you to embrace brotherly love, and continue in it. Let me apply myself to you of the lower sort, and desire you will consider, when any of you make use of fair and enticing words to draw in customers, whether you do it for their sakes or your own. And then, for whose sakes do you think it is, that your leaders are so industrious to put into your heads all that party rage and virulence? is it not to make you the tools and instruments, by which they work out their own designs? Has this spirit of faction been useful to any of you in your worldly concerns, except to those who have traded in whispering, backbiting, or informing, wanting skill or honesty to thrive by fairer methods? It is no business of yours to inquire, who is at the head of armies, or of councils, unless you had power and skill to choose, neither of which is ever likely to be your case; and therefore to fill your heads with fears, and hatred of persons and things, of which it is impossible you can ever make a right judgment, or to set you at variance with your neighbour, because his thoughts are not the same as yours,

is not only in a very gross manner to cheat you of your time and quiet, but likewise to endanger your souls.

Secondly ; In order to restore brotherly love, let me earnestly exhort you to stand firm in your religion ; I mean, the true religion hitherto established among us, without varying in the least either to popery on the one side, or to fanaticism on the other ; and in a particular manner beware of that word, moderation ; and believe it, that your neighbour is not immediately a villain, a papist, and a traitor, because the fanatics and their adherents will not allow him to be a moderate man. Nay, it is very probable, that your teacher himself may be a loyal, pious, and able divine, without the least grain of moderation, as the word is too frequently understood. Therefore, to set you right in this matter, I will lay before you the character of a truly moderate man ; and then I will give you the description of such a one as falsely pretendeth to that title.

A man truly moderate is steady in the doctrine and discipline of the church, but with a due Christian charity to all who dissent from it out of a principle of conscience ; the freedom of which, he thinketh, ought to be fully allowed, as long as it is not abused, but never trusted with power. He is ready to defend with his life and fortune the protestant succession, and the protestant established faith, against all invaders whatsoever. He is for giving the crown its just prerogative, and the people their just liberties. He hateth no man for differing from him in political opinions ; nor doth he think it a maxim infallible, that virtue should always attend upon favour, and vice upon disgrace. These are some few lineaments in the character of a truly moderate

man ; let us now compare it with the description of one who usually passeth under that title.

A moderate man, in the new meaning of the word, is one to whom all religion is indifferent ; who, although he denominates himself of the church, regardeth it no more than a conventicle. He perpetually raileth at the body of the clergy, with exceptions only to a very few, who, he hopeth, and probably upon false grounds, are as ready to betray their rights and properties as himself. He thinketh the power of the people can never be too great, nor that of the prince too little ; and yet this very notion he publisheth, as his best argument, to prove him a most loyal subject. Every opinion in government, that differeth in the least from his, tendeth directly to popery, slavery, and rebellion. Whoever lieth under the frown of power, can, in his judgment, neither have common sense, common honesty, nor religion. Lastly, his devotion consisteth in drinking gibbets, confusion, and damnation ;* in profanely idolizing the memory of one dead prince, † and ungratefully trampling upon the ashes of another. ‡

By these marks you will easily distinguish a truly moderate man from those who are commonly, but very falsely so called ; and while persons thus qualified are so numerous and so noisy, so full of zeal and industry to gain proselytes, and spread their opinions among the people, it can-

* The subject of these political toasts was the theme of much discussion in Ireland.

† King William.

‡ Queen Anne.

not be wondered at that there should be so little brotherly love left among us.

Lastly, it would probably contribute to restore some degree of brotherly love, if we would but consider, that the matter of those disputes, which inflame us to this degree, doth not, in its own nature, at all concern the generality of mankind. Indeed, as to those who have been great gainers or losers by the changes of the world, the case is different: and to preach moderation to the first, and patience to the last, would perhaps be to little purpose: but what is that to the bulk of the people, who are not properly concerned in the quarrel, although evil instruments have drawn them into it? for, if the reasonable men on both sides were to confer opinions, they would find neither religion, loyalty, nor interest, are at all affected in this dispute. Not religion, because the members of the church, on both sides, profess to agree in every article: not loyalty to our prince, which is pretended to by one party as much as the other, and therefore can be no subject for debate: nor interest, for trade and industry lie open to all; and, what is farther, concerns only those who have expectations from the public; so that the body of the people, if they knew their own good, might yet live amicably together, and leave their betters to quarrel among themselves; who might also probably soon come to a better temper, if they were less seconded and supported by the poor deluded multitude.

I have now done with my text, which I confess to have treated in a manner more suited to the present times, than to the nature of the subject in general. That I have not been more particu-

lar in explaining the several parts and properties of this great duty of brotherly love, the apostle to the Thessalonians will plead my excuse.—“Touching brotherly love (saith he) ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.” So that nothing remains to add, but our prayers to God, that he would please to restore and continue this duty of brotherly love or charity among us, the very bond of peace and of all virtues.

Nov. 29, 1717.

SERMON VI.

ON

THE MARTYRDOM OF KING CHARLES I.

PREACHED AT ST PATRICK'S, DUBLIN, JAN. 30,
1725-6, BEING SUNDAY.

GENESIS, XLIX. 5, 6, 7.

Simeon and Levi are brethren ; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.

O my soul, come not thou into their secret ; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united ; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall.

Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce ; and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

I KNOW very well, that the church hath been often censured for keeping holy this day of humiliation, in memory of that excellent king and blessed martyr Charles I., who rather chose to die on a scaffold, than betray the religion and liberties of his people, wherewith God and the laws had entrusted him. But at the same time, it is manifest that those who make such censures, are either people without any religion at all, or who derive their principles, and perhaps their birth, from the abettors of those who contrived

the murder of that prince, and have not yet shown the world that their opinions are changed. It is alleged, that the observation of this day hath served to continue and increase the animosity and enmity among our countrymen, and to disunite protestants; that a law was made, upon the restoration of the martyr's son, for a general pardon and oblivion, forbidding all reproaches upon that occasion; and since none are now alive who were actors or instruments in that tragedy, it is thought hard and uncharitable to keep up the memory of it for all generations.

Now, because I conceive most of you to be ignorant in many particulars concerning that horrid murder, and the rebellion which preceded it; I will,

First, relate to you so much of the story as may be sufficient for your information:

Secondly, I will tell you the consequences which this bloody deed had upon these kingdoms:

And, lastly, I will shew you to what good uses this solemn day of humiliation may be applied.

As to the first; in the reign of this prince, Charles the martyr, the power and prerogative of the king were much greater than they are in our times, and so had been for at least seven hundred years before; and the best princes we ever had, carried their power much farther than the blessed martyr offered to do, in the most blameable part of his reign. But, the lands of the crown having been prodigally bestowed to favourites in the preceding reigns, the succeeding kings could not support themselves without taxes raised by parliament; which put them under a necessity of frequently calling those assemblies;

and the crown lands being gotten into the hands of the nobility and gentry, beside the possessions of which the church had been robbed by king Henry the Eighth, power, which always follows property, grew to lean to the side of the people, by whom even the just rights of the crown were often disputed.

But farther: Upon the cruel persecution raised against the protestants, under Queen Mary, among great numbers who fled the kingdom to seek for shelter, several went and resided at Geneva, which is a commonwealth governed without a king, and where the religion, contrived by Calvin, is without the order of bishops. When the protestant faith was restored by Queen Elizabeth, those who fled to Geneva returned among the rest home to England, and were grown so fond of the government and religion of the place they had left, that they used all possible endeavours to introduce both into their own country; at the same time continually preaching and railing against ceremonies and distinct habits of the clergy; taxing whatever they disliked as a remnant of popery; and continued extremely troublesome to the church and state, under that great queen, as well as her successor king James I. These people called themselves puritans, as pretending to a purer faith than those of the church established. And these were the founders of our dissenters. They did not think it sufficient to leave all the errors of popery; but threw off many laudable and edifying institutions of the primitive church, and, at last, even the government of bishops; which, having been ordained by the apostles themselves, had continued without interruption, in all Christian churches, for above fifteen hundred years. And all this they did, not because

those things were evil, but because they were kept by the papists. From thence they proceeded, by degrees, to quarrel with the kingly government; because, as I have already said, the city of Geneva, to which their fathers had flown for refuge, was a commonwealth, or government of the people.

These puritans, about the middle of the martyr's reign, were grown to a considerable faction in the kingdom, and in the lower house of parliament. They filled the public with the most false and bitter libels against the bishops and the clergy, accusing chiefly the very best among them of popery; and at the same time, the house of commons grew so insolent and uneasy to the king, that they refused to furnish him with necessary supplies for the support of his family, unless upon such conditions as he could not submit to without forfeiting his conscience and honour, and even his coronation oath. And in such an extremity, he was forced upon a practice, no way justifiable, of raising money; for which, however, he had the opinion of the judges on his side; for wicked judges there were in those times as well as in ours. There were likewise many complaints, and sometimes justly, made against the proceedings of a certain court, called the star-chamber, a judicature of great antiquity: but it had suffered some corruptions, for which, however, the king was nowise answerable. I cannot recollect any more subjects of complaint with the least ground of reason; nor is it needful to recollect them, because this gracious king did, upon the first application, redress all grievances by an act of parliament, and put it out of his power to do any hardships for the future. But that wicked faction in the house of commons, not content

with all those marks of his justice and condescension, urged still for more ; and joining with a factious party from Scotland, who had the same fancies in religion, forced him to pass an act for cutting off the head of his best and chief minister ; and at the same time compelled him, by tumults and threatenings of a packed rabble, poisoned with the same doctrines, to pass another law, by which it should not be in his power to dissolve that parliament, without their own consent.— Thus, by the greatest weakness and infatuation that ever possessed any man's spirit, this prince did in effect sign his own destruction. For the house of commons, having the reins in their own hands, drove on furiously ; sent him every day some unreasonable demand ; and when he refused to grant it, made use of their own power, and declared that an ordinance of both houses, without the king's consent, should be obeyed as a law, contrary to all reason and equity, as well as to the fundamental constitution of the kingdom.

About this time the rebellion in Ireland broke out, wherein his parliament refused to assist him ; nor would accept his offer to come hither in person to subdue those rebels. These, and a thousand other barbarities, forced the king to summon his loyal subjects to his standard in his own defence. Meanwhile the English parliament, instead of helping the poor protestants here, seized on the very army that his majesty was sending over for our relief, and turned them against their own sovereign. The rebellion in England continued for four or five years : at last the king was forced to fly in disguise to the Scots, who sold him to the rebels. And these puritans had the impudent cruelty to try his sacred person in a mock court of justice, and cut off his head ; which he

might have saved, if he would have yielded to betray the constitution in church and state.

In this whole proceeding, Simeon and Levi were brethren; the wicked insinuations of those fanatical preachers stirring up the cruelty of the soldiers, who, by force of arms, excluded from the house every member of parliament whom they apprehended to bear the least inclination toward an agreement with the king, suffering only those to enter who thirsted chiefly for his blood; and this is the very account given by their own writers. Whence it is clear that this prince was, in all respects, a real martyr for the true religion and the liberty of the people. That odious parliament had first turned the bishops out of the house of lords; in a few years after, they murdered their king; then immediately abolished the whole house of lords; and so, at last, obtained their wishes, of having a government of the people, and a new religion, both after the manner of Geneva, without a king, a bishop, or a nobleman; and this they blasphemously called, "The kingdom of Christ and his saints."

This is enough for your information on the first head: I shall therefore proceed to the second, wherein I will show you the miserable consequences which that abominable rebellion and murder produced in these nations.

First, The Irish rebellion was wholly owing to that wicked English parliament. For the leaders in the Irish popish massacre would never have dared to stir a finger, if they had not been encouraged by that rebellious spirit in the English house of commons, which they very well knew must disable the king from sending any supplies to his protestant subjects here; and therefore we may truly say that the English parliament held the

king's hands, while the Irish papists here were cutting our grandfathers' throats.

Secondly, That murderous puritan parliament, when they had all in their own power, could not agree upon any one method of settling a form either of religion or civil government; but changed every day from schism to schism, from heresy to heresy, and from one faction to another: whence arose that wild confusion still continuing in our several ways of serving God, and those absurd notions of civil power, which have so often torn us with factions more than any other nation in Europe.

Thirdly, To this rebellion and murder have been owing the rise and progress of atheism among us. For men, observing what numberless villanies of all kinds were committed during twenty years, under pretence of zeal and the reformation of God's church, were easily tempted to doubt that all religion was a mere imposture: and the same spirit of infidelity, so far spread among us at this present, is nothing but the fruit of the seeds sown by those rebellious hypocritical saints.

Fourthly, The old virtue, and loyalty, and generous spirit of the English nation, were wholly corrupted, by the power, the doctrine, and the example, of those wicked people. Many of the ancient nobility were killed, and their families extinct, in defence of their prince and country, or murdered by the merciless courts of justice. Some of the worst among them favoured or complied with the reigning iniquities; and not a few of the new set, created when the martyr's son was restored, were such who had drunk too deep of the bad principles then prevailing.

Fifthly, The children of the murdered prince were forced to fly, for the safety of their lives, to

foreign countries; where one of them at least, I mean king James II., was seduced to popery; which ended in the loss of his kingdoms, the misery and desolation of this country, and a long and expensive war abroad. Our deliverance was owing to the valour and conduct of the late king; and therefore we ought to remember him with gratitude, but not mingled with blasphemy or idolatry. It was happy that his interests and ours were the same: and God gave him greater success than our sins deserved. But, as a house thrown down by a storm is seldom rebuilt without some change in the foundation; so it hath happened, that, since the late revolution, men have sate much looser in the true fundamentals both of religion and government, and factions have been more violent, treacherous, and malicious, than ever; men running naturally from one extreme into another; and, for private ends, taking up those very opinions professed by the leaders in that rebellion, which carried the blessed martyr to the scaffold.

Sixthly, Another consequence of this horrid rebellion and murder was, the destroying or defacing of such vast number of God's houses. "In their self-will they digged down a wall." If a stranger should now travel in England, and observe the churches in his way, he could not otherwise conclude, than that some vast army of Turks or heathens had been sent on purpose to ruin and blot out all marks of Christianity. They spared neither the statues of saints, nor ancient prelates, nor kings, nor benefactors; broke down the tombs and monuments of men famous in their generations; seized the vessels of silver set apart for the holiest use; tore down the most innocent ornaments both within and without; made the houses

of prayer dens of thieves, or stables for cattle. These were the mildest effects of puritan zeal and devotion for Christ; and this was what themselves affected to call a thorough reformation. In this kingdom, those ravages were not so easily seen; for, the people here being too poor to raise such noble temples, the mean ones we had were not defaced, but totally destroyed.

Upon the whole, it is certain, that although God might have found out many other ways to have punished a sinful people, without permitting this rebellion and murder; yet, as the course of the world hath run ever since, we need seek for no other causes of all the public evils we have hitherto suffered, or may suffer for the future, by the misconduct of princes, or wickedness of the people.

I go on now, upon the third head, to show you to what good uses this solemn day of humiliation may be applied.

First, It may be an instruction to princes themselves, to be careful in the choice of those who are their advisers in matters of law. All the judges of England, except one or two, advised the king, that he might legally raise money upon the subjects for building of ships, without consent of parliament; which, as it was the greatest oversight of his reign, so it proved the principal foundation of all his misfortunes. Princes may likewise learn from hence, not to sacrifice a faithful servant to the rage of a faction; nor to trust any body of men with a greater share of power than the laws of the land have appointed them, much less to deposit it in their hands until they shall please to restore it.

Secondly, By bringing to mind the tragedy of

this day, and the consequences that have arisen from it, we shall be convinced how necessary it is for those in power to curb in season all such unruly spirits as desire to introduce new doctrines and discipline in the church, or new forms of government in the state. Those wicked puritans began, in queen Elizabeth's time, to quarrel only with surplices and other habits, with the ring in matrimony, the cross in baptism, and the like; thence they went on to farther matters of higher importance; and at last they must needs have the whole government of the church dissolved. This great work they compassed, first, by depriving the bishops of their seats in parliament; then they abolished the whole order; and at last, which was their original design, they seized on all the church lands, and divided the spoil among themselves, and, like Jeroboam, made priests of the very dregs of the people. This was their way of reforming the church. As to the civil government, you have already heard how they modelled it, upon the murder of their king, and discarding the nobility. Yet, clearly to show what a Babel they had built, after twelve years' trial, and twenty several sorts of government, the nation, grown weary of their tyranny, was forced to call in the son of him whom those reformers had sacrificed. And thus were Simeon and Levi divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel.

Thirdly, Although the successors of these puritans, I mean our present dissenters, do not think fit to observe this day of humiliation; yet it would be very proper in them, upon some occasions, to renounce, in a public manner, those principles upon which their predecessors acted; and it will be more prudent in them to do so, because those very puritans, of whom ours are

followers, found, by experience, that after they had overturned the church and state, murdered their king, and were projecting what they called a kingdom of the saints, they were cheated of the power and possessions they only panted after, by an upstart sect of religion that grew out of their own bowels, who subjected them to one tyrant, while they were endeavouring to set up a thousand.

Fourthly, Those who profess to be followers of our church established, and yet presume in discourse to justify or excuse that rebellion and murder of the king, ought to consider how utterly contrary all such opinions are to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, as well as to the articles of our church, and to the preaching and practice of its true professors for above a hundred years. Of late times indeed, and I speak it with grief of heart, we have heard even sermons of a strange nature; although reason would make one think it a very unaccountable way of procuring favour under a monarchy, by palliating and lessening the guilt of those who murdered the best of kings in cold blood, and, for a time, destroyed the very monarchy itself. Pray God, we may never more hear such doctrine from the pulpit, nor have it scattered about in print, to poison the people!

Fifthly, Some general knowledge of this horrid rebellion and murder, with the consequences they had upon the nations, may be a warning to our people, not to believe a lie, and to mistrust those deluding spirits, who, under pretence of a purer and more reformed religion, would lead them from their duty to God and the laws. Politicians may say what they please; but it is no hard thing at all for the meanest person, who hath common un-

derstanding, to know whether he be well or ill governed. If he be freely allowed to follow his trade and calling; if he be secure in his property, and hath the benefit of the law to defend himself against injustice and oppression; if his religion be different from that of his country, and the government think fit to tolerate it (which he may be very secure of, let it be what it will); he ought to be fully satisfied, and give no offence by writing or discourse, to the worship established, as the dissenting preachers are too apt to do. But, if he hath any new visions of his own, it is his duty to be quiet, and possess them in silence, without disturbing the community by a furious zeal for making proselytes. This was the folly and madness of those ancient puritan fanatics: they must needs overturn heaven and earth, violate all the laws of God and man, make their country a field of blood, to propagate whatever wild or wicked opinions came into their heads, declaring all their absurdities and blasphemies to proceed from the Holy Ghost.

To conclude this head. In answer to that objection of keeping up animosity and hatred between protestants, by the observation of this day; if there be any sect or sort of people among us, who profess the same principles in religion and government which those puritan rebels put in practice, I think it is the interest of all those who love the church and king, to keep up as strong a party against them as possible, until they shall, in a body, renounce all those wicked opinions upon which their predecessors acted, to the disgrace of Christianity, and the perpetual infamy of the English nation.

When we accuse the papists of the horrid doc-

trine, "that no faith ought to be kept with heretics," they deny it to a man; and yet we justly think it dangerous to trust them, because we know their actions have been sometimes suitable to that opinion. But the followers of those who beheaded the martyr, have not yet renounced their principles; and till they do, they may be justly suspected; neither will the bare name of protestants set them right; for surely Christ requires more from us, than a profession of hating popery, which a Turk or an atheist may do as well as a protestant.

If an enslaved people should recover their liberty from a tyrannical power of any sort, who could blame them for commemorating their deliverance by a day of joy and thanksgiving? And doth not the destruction of a church, a king, and three kingdoms, by the artifices, hypocrisy, and cruelty, of a wicked race of soldiers and preachers, and other sons of Belial, equally require a solemn time of humiliation? especially since the consequences of that bloody scene still continue, as I have already shown, in their effects upon us.

Thus I have done with the three heads I proposed to discourse on. But before I conclude, I must give a caution to those who hear me, that they may not think I am pleading for absolute unlimited power in any one man. It is true, all power is from God; and, as the apostle says, "the powers that be are ordained of God:" but this is in the same sense that all we have is from God, our food and raiment, and whatever possessions we hold by lawful means. Nothing can be meant in those or any other words of scripture, to justify tyrannical power, or the savage cruelties of those

heathen emperors who lived in the time of the apostles. And so St Paul concludes, "The powers that be are ordained of God:" for what? why, "for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise, the reward of them that do well." There is no more inward value in the greatest emperor, than in the meanest of his subjects: his body is composed of the same substance, the same parts, and with the same or greater infirmities: his education is generally worse, by flattery, and idleness, and luxury, and those evil dispositions that early power is apt to give. It is therefore against common sense, that his private personal interest, or pleasure, should be put in the balance with the safety of millions; every one of which is equal by nature, equal in the sight of God, equally capable of salvation: and it is for their sakes, not his own, that he is entrusted with the government over them. He hath as high trust as can safely be reposed in one man; and if he discharge it as he ought, he deserves all the honour and duty that a mortal may be allowed to receive. His personal failings we have nothing to do with; and errors in government are to be imputed to his ministers in the state. To what height those errors may be suffered to proceed, is not the business of this day, or this place, or of my function to determine. When oppressions grow too great and universal to be borne, nature or necessity may find a remedy. But if a private person reasonably expects pardon, upon his amendment, for all faults that are not capital, it would be a hard condition indeed, not to give the same allowance to a prince; who must see with other men's eyes, and hear with other men's ears, which are often wilfully blind and deaf. Such was the condition of the

martyr; and is so, in some degree, of all other princes. Yet this we may justly say in defence of the common people in all civilized nations, that it must be a very bad government indeed, where the body of the subjects will not rather choose to live in peace and obedience, than take up arms on pretence of faults in the administration, unless where the vulgar are deluded by false preachers to grow fond of new visions and fancies in religion; which, managed by dexterous men, for sinister ends of malice, envy, or ambition, have often made whole nations run mad. This was exactly the case in the whole progress of that great rebellion, and the murder of king Charles I. But the late revolution under the prince of Orange was occasioned by a proceeding directly contrary, the oppression and injustice there beginning from the throne: for that unhappy prince, king James II., did not only invade our laws and liberties, but would have forced a false religion upon his subjects, for which he was deservedly rejected, since there could be no other remedy found, or at least agreed on. But, under the blessed martyr, the deluded people would have forced many false religions, not only on their fellow-subjects, but even upon their sovereign himself, and at the same time invaded all his undoubted rights; and because he would not comply, raised a horrid rebellion, wherein, by the permission of God, they prevailed, and put their sovereign to death, like a common criminal, in the face of the world.

Therefore, those who seem to think they cannot otherwise justify the late revolution, and the change of the succession, than by lessening the guilt of the puritans, do certainly put the greatest

affront imaginable upon the present powers, by supposing any relation or resemblance between that rebellion and the late revolution; and, consequently, that the present establishment is to be defended by the same arguments which those usurpers made use of, who, to obtain their tyranny, trampled under foot all the laws both of God and man.

One great design of my discourse was, to give you warning against running into either extreme of two bad opinions with relation to obedience. As kings are called gods upon earth, so some would allow them an equal power with God over all laws and ordinances; and that the liberty, and property, and life, and religion of the subject, depended wholly upon the breath of the prince; which however, I hope, was never meant by those who pleaded for passive obedience. And this opinion hath not been confined to that party which was first charged with it; but had sometimes gone over to the other, to serve many an evil turn of interest or ambition; who have been as ready to enlarge prerogative, where they could find their own account, as the highest maintainers of it.

On the other side, some look upon kings as answerable for every mistake or omission in government, and bound to comply with the most unreasonable demands of an unquiet faction; which was the case of those who persecuted the blessed martyr of this day from his throne to the scaffold.

Between these two extremes, it is easy, from what hath been said, to choose a middle; to be good and loyal subjects, yet, according to your power, faithful assertors of your religion and li-

berties; to avoid all broachers, and preachers of newfangled doctrines in the church; to be strict observers of the laws, which cannot be justly taken from you without your own consent: in short, “to obey God and the king, and meddle not with those who are given to change.”

Which that you may all do, &c.

SERMON VII.
ON FALSE WITNESS.*

EXODUS, XX. 16.

*Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy
Neighbour.*

IN those great changes that are made in a country by the prevailing of one party over another; it is very convenient that the prince, and those who are in authority under him, should use all just and proper methods for preventing any mischief to the public from seditious men. And governors do well, when they encourage any good subject to discover (as his duty obligeth him)

* The Dean, in consequence of his political opinions, and the firmness with which he avowed them, was often exposed to danger and prosecution, by informers of various descriptions. He was, therefore, well qualified to place before his congregation the danger to public order and individual liberty, as well as to religion and morality, from the pestilent tribe, the *Delatores* of the Roman empire.

whatever plots or conspiracies may be any way dangerous to the state: neither are they to be blamed even when they receive informations from bad men, in order to find out the truth, when it concerns the public welfare. Every one, indeed, is naturally inclined to have an ill opinion of an informer; although it is not impossible but an honest man may be called by that name. For whoever knoweth any thing, the telling of which would prevent some great evil to his prince, his country, or his neighbour, is bound in conscience to reveal it. But the mischief is, that, when parties are violently inflamed, which seemeth unfortunately to be our case at present, there is never wanting a set of evil instruments, who, either out of mad zeal, private hatred, or filthy lucre, are always ready to offer their services to the prevailing side, and become accusers of their brethren, without any regard to truth or charity. Holy David numbers this among the chief of his sufferings; "False witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty."* Our Saviour and his apostles did likewise undergo the same distress, as we read both in the Gospels and the Acts.

Now, because the sin of false witnessing is so horrible and dangerous in itself, and so odious to God and man; and because the bitterness of too many among us is risen to such a height, that it is not easy to know where it will stop, or how far some weak and wicked minds may be carried by a mistaken zeal, a malicious temper, or hope of reward, to break this great commandment deliver-

* Psalm xxvii. 12.

ed in the text: therefore, in order to prevent this evil, and the consequences of it, at least among you who are my hearers, I shall,

- I. *First*, Show you several ways by which a man may be called a false witness against his neighbour.
- II. *Secondly*, I shall give you some rules for your conduct and behaviour, in order to defend yourselves against the malice and cunning of false accusers.
- III. And *lastly*, I shall conclude with showing you, very briefly, how far it is your duty, as good subjects and good neighbours, to bear faithful witness, when you are lawfully called to it by those in authority, or by the sincere advice of your own consciences.

I. As to the first, there are several ways by which a man may be justly called a false witness against his neighbour.

First, According to the direct meaning of the word, when a man accuseth his neighbour without the least ground of truth. So we read, "that Jezabel hired two sons of Belial to accuse Naboth for blaspheming God and the king, for which, although he was entirely innocent, he was stoned to death." And in our age it is not easy to tell how many men have lost their lives, been ruined in their fortunes, and put to ignominious punishment, by the downright perjury of false witnesses! the law itself in such cases being not able to protect the innocent. But this is so horrible a crime, that it doth not need to be aggravated by words.

A second way by which a man becometh a

false witness is, when he mixeth falsehood and truth together, or concealeth some circumstances, which, if they were told, would destroy the falsehoods he uttereth. So the two false witnesses who accused our Saviour before the chief priests, by a very little perverting of his words, would have made him guilty of a capital crime: for so it was among the Jews to prophesy any evil against the temple: This fellow said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days;" whereas the words, as our Saviour spoke them, were to another end, and differently expressed: for when the Jews asked him to shew them a sign, he said; "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." In such cases as these, an innocent man is half confounded, and looketh as if he were guilty, since he neither can deny his words, nor perhaps readily strip them from the malicious additions of a false witness.

Thirdly, A man is a false witness, when, in accusing his neighbour, he endeavours to aggravate by his gestures and tone of his voice, or when he chargeth a man with words which were only repeated or quoted from somebody else. As if any one should tell me that he heard another speak certain dangerous and seditious speeches, and I should immediately accuse him for speaking them himself; and so drop the only circumstance that made him innocent. This was the case of St. Stephen. The false witness said, "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law." Whereas St. Stephen said no such words; but only repeated some prophecies of Jeremiah or Malachi, which threatened Jerusalem with destruction if it did not repent: however, by the fury of the people, this innocent

holy person was stoned to death for words he never spoke.

Fourthly, The blackest kind of false witnesses are those, who do the office of the devil, by tempting their brethren in order to betray them. I cannot call to mind any instances of this kind mentioned in holy scripture. But I am afraid this vile practice hath been too much followed in the world. When a man's temper hath been so soured by misfortunes and hard usage, that perhaps he hath reason enough to complain; then one of these seducers, under the pretence of friendship, will seem to lament his case, urge the hardships he hath suffered, and endeavour to raise his passions, until he hath said something that a malicious informer can pervert or aggravate against him in a court of justice.

Fifthly, Whoever beareth witness against his neighbour, out of a principle of malice and revenge, from any old grudge, or hatred to his person, such a man is a false witness in the sight of God, although what he says be true; because the motive or cause is evil, not to serve his prince or country, but to gratify his own resentments. And therefore, although a man thus accused may be very justly punished by the law, yet this doth by no means acquit the accuser; who, instead of regarding the public service, intended only to glut his private rage and spite.

Sixthly, I number among false witnesses, all those who make a trade of being informers in hope of favour or reward; and to this end employ their time, either by listening in public places, to catch up an accidental word; or in corrupting men's servants to discover any unwary expression of their master: or thrusting themselves into company, and then using the most indecent scurrilous

language; fastening a thousand falsehoods and scandals upon a whole party, on purpose to provoke such an answer as they may turn to an accusation. And truly this ungodly race is said to be grown so numerous, that men of different parties can hardly converse together with any security. Even the pulpit hath not been free from the misrepresentation of these informers; of whom the clergy have not wanted occasions to complain with holy David: "They daily mistake my words, all they imagine is to do me evil." Nor is it any wonder at all, that this trade of informing should be now in a flourishing condition, since our case is manifestly thus: We are divided into two parties, with very little charity or temper toward each other: the prevailing side may talk of past things as they please, with security; and generally do it in the most provoking words they can invent; while those who are down, are sometimes tempted to speak in favour of a lost cause, and therefore, without great caution, must needs be often caught tripping, and thereby furnish plenty of materials for witnesses and informers.

Lastly, Those may be well reckoned among false witnesses against their neighbour, who bring him into trouble and punishment by such accusations as are of no consequence at all to the public, nor can be of any other use but to create vexation. Such witnesses are those who cannot hear an idle intemperate expression, but they must immediately run to the magistrate to inform; or, perhaps wrangling in their cups over night, when they were not able to speak or apprehend three words of common sense, will pretend to remember every thing the next morning, and think themselves very properly qualified to be accusers of their brethren. God be thanked, the throne

of our king is too firmly settled to be shaken by the folly and rashness of every sottish companion. And I do not in the least doubt, that when those in power begin to observe the falsehood, the prevarication, the aggravating manner, the treachery and seducing, the malice and revenge, the love of lucre, and, lastly, the trifling accusations in too many wicked people; they will be as ready to discourage every sort of those whom I have numbered among false witnesses, as they will be to countenance honest men, who, out of a true zeal to their prince and country, do, in the innocence of their hearts, freely discover whatever they may apprehend to be dangerous to either. A good Christian will think it sufficient to reprove his brother for a rash unguarded word, where there is neither danger nor evil example to be apprehended; or, if he will not amend by reproof, avoid his conversation.

II. And thus much may serve to show the several ways whereby a man may be said to be a false witness against his neighbour. I might have added one kind more, and it is of those who inform against their neighbour out of fear of punishment to themselves; which, although it be more excusable, and hath less of malice than any of the rest, cannot however be justified. I go on therefore, upon the second head, to give you some rules for your conduct and behaviour, in order to defend yourselves against the malice and cunning of false accusers.

It is readily agreed, that innocence is the best protection in the world; yet that it is not always sufficient without some degree of prudence, our Saviour himself intimateth to us, by instructing his disciples "to be wise as serpents, as well as in-

nocent as doves." But if ever innocence be too weak a defence, it is chiefly so in jealous and suspicious times, when factions are arrived to a high pitch of animosity, and the minds of men, instead of being warmed by a true zeal for religion, are inflamed only by party fury. Neither is virtue itself a sufficient security in such times, because it is not allowed to be virtue, otherwise than as it hath a mixture of party.

However, although virtue and innocence are no infallible defence against perjury, malice, and subornation, yet they are great supports for enabling us to bear those evils with temper and resignation; and it is an unspeakable comfort to a good man, under the malignity of evil mercenary tongues, that a few years will carry his appeal to a higher tribunal, where false witnesses, instead of daring to bring accusations before an all-seeing Judge, will call for mountains to cover them. As for earthly judges, they seldom have it in their power, and God knows whether they have it in their will, to mingle mercy with justice; they are so far from knowing the hearts of the accuser or the accused, that they cannot know their own; and their understanding is frequently biassed, although their intentions be just. They are often prejudiced to causes, parties, and persons, through the infirmity of human nature, without being sensible themselves that they are so: and therefore, although God may pardon their errors here, he certainly will not ratify their sentences hereafter.

However, since, as we have before observed, our Saviour prescribeth to us to be not only harmless as doves, but wise as serpents; give me leave to prescribe to you some rules, which the most ignorant person may follow for the conduct

of his life, with safety in perilous times, against false accusers.

1st, Let me advise you to have nothing at all to do with that which is commonly called politics, or the government of the world, in the nature of which it is certain you are utterly ignorant; and when your opinion is wrong, although it proceeds from ignorance, it shall be an accusation against you. Besides, opinions in government are right or wrong, just according to the humour and disposition of the times; and unless you have judgment to distinguish, you may be punished at one time for what you would be rewarded in another.

2dly, Be ready at all times, in your words and actions, to show your loyalty to the king that reigns over you. This is the plain manifest doctrine of holy scripture: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme," &c. And another apostle telleth us, "The powers that be are ordained of God." Kings are the ordinances of man by the permission of God, and they are ordained of God by his instrument man. The powers that be, the present powers, which are ordained by God, and yet in some sense are the ordinances of man, are what you must obey, without presuming to examine into rights and titles; neither can it be reasonably expected, that the powers in being, or in possession, should suffer their title to be publicly disputed by subjects without severe punishment. And to say the truth, there is no duty in religion more easy to the generality of mankind, than obedience to government; I say to the generality of mankind; because, while their law, and property, and religion are preserved, it is of no great consequence

to them by whom they are governed, and therefore they are under no temptation to desire a change.

3dly, In order to prevent any charge from the malice of false witnesses, be sure to avoid intemperance. If it be often so hard for men to govern their tongues when they are in their right senses, how can they hope to do it when they are heated with drink? In those cases most men regard not what they say, and too many not what they swear; neither will a man's memory, disordered with drunkenness, serve to defend himself, or satisfy him whether he were guilty or not.

4thly, Avoid as much as possible, the conversation of those people who are given to talk of public persons and affairs, especially of those whose opinions in such matters are different from yours. I never once knew any disputes of this kind managed with tolerable temper; but on both sides they only agree as much as possible to provoke the passions of each other: indeed with this disadvantage, that he who argueth on the side of power may speak securely the utmost his malice can invent; while the other lieth every moment at the mercy of an informer; and the law, in these cases, will give no allowance at all for passion, inadvertency, or the highest provocation.

III. I come now, in the last place, to show you how far it is your duty, as good subjects and good neighbours, to bear faithful witness when you are lawfully called to it by those in authority, or by the sincere advice of your own consciences.

In what I have hitherto said, you easily find, that I do not talk of bearing witness in general, which is and may be lawful upon a thousand ac-

counts, in relation to property and other matters, and wherein there are many scandalous corruptions almost peculiar to this country, which would require to be handled by themselves. But I have confined my discourse only to that branch of bearing false witness whereby the public is injured, in the safety or honour of the prince, or those in authority under him.

In order therefore to be a faithful witness, it is first necessary that a man doth not undertake it from the least prospect of any private advantage to himself. The smallest mixture of that leaven will sour the whole lump. Interest will infallibly bias his judgment, although he be ever so firmly resolved to say nothing but truth. He cannot serve God and mammon: but as interest is the chief end, he will use the most effectual means to advance it. He will aggravate circumstances to make his testimony valuable; he will be sorry if the person he accuseth should be able to clear himself; in short, he is labouring a point which he thinks necessary to his own good; and it would be a disappointment to him, that his neighbour should prove innocent.

2dly, Every good subject is obliged to bear witness against his neighbour, for any action or words, the telling of which would be of disadvantage to the public, and the concealment dangerous, or of ill example. Of this nature are all plots and conspiracies against the peace of a nation; all disgraceful words against a prince, such as clearly discover a disloyal and rebellious heart. But, where our prince and country can possibly receive no damage or disgrace; where no scandal or ill example is given; and our neighbour, it may be, provoked by us, happeneth privately to drop a rash or indiscreet word, which in strict-

ness of law might bring him under trouble, perhaps to his utter undoing ; there we are obliged, we ought to proceed no farther than warning and reproof.

In describing to you the several kinds of false witnesses, I have made it less necessary to dwell much longer upon this head : because a faithful witness, like every thing else, is known by his contrary : Therefore it would be only a repetition of what I have already said, to tell you that the strictest truth is required in a witness ; that he should be wholly free from malice against the person he accuses ; that he should not aggravate the smallest circumstance against the criminal, nor conceal the smallest in his favour ; and to crown all, though I have hinted it before, that the only cause or motive of his undertaking an office, so subject to censure, and so difficult to perform, should be the safety and service of his prince and country.

Under these conditions and limitations (but not otherwise,) there is no manner of doubt but a good man may lawfully and justly become a witness in behalf of the public, and may perform that office (in its own nature not very desirable,) with honour and integrity. For the command in the text is positive, as well as negative ; that is to say, as we are directed not to bear false witness against our neighbour, so we are to bear true. Next to the word of God, and the advice of teachers, every man's conscience, strictly examined, will be his best director in this weighty point : and to that I shall leave him.

It might perhaps be thought proper to have added something by way of advice to those who are unhappily engaged in this abominable trade and sin of bearing false witness ; but I am far

from believing or supposing any of that destructive tribe are now my hearers. I look upon them as a sort of people that seldom frequent these holy places, where they can hardly pick up any materials to serve their turn, unless they think it worth their while to misrepresent or pervert the words of the preacher: And whoever is that way disposed, I doubt, cannot be in a very good condition to edify and reform himself by what he heareth. God in his mercy preserve us from all the guilt of this grievous sin forbidden in my text, and from the snares of those who are guilty of it.

I shall conclude with one or two precepts given by Moses, from God, to the children of Israel, in the xxiiid of Exod. 1, 2.

“Thou shalt not raise a false report: Put not thine hand with the wicked, to be an unrighteous witness.

“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many, to wrest judgment.”

Now to God the Father, &c.

SERMON VIII.

ON

THE POOR MAN'S CONTENTMENT.

PHILIPPIANS, iv. 11.

*I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith
to be content.*

THE holy scripture is full of expressions to set forth the miserable condition of man during the whole progress of his life ; his weakness, pride, and vanity ; his unmeasurable desires, and perpetual disappointments ; the prevalency of his passions, and the corruptions of his reason ; his deluding hopes, and his real as well as imaginary fears ; his natural and artificial wants ; his cares and anxieties ; the diseases of his body, and the diseases of his mind ; the shortness of his life ; his dread of a future state, with his carelessness to prepare for it : and the wise men of all ages have made the same reflections.

But all these are general calamities, from which none are excepted ; and being without remedy, it is vain to bewail them. The great question, long debated in the world, is, whether the rich or the

poor are the least miserable of the two? It is certain, that no rich man ever desired to be poor, and that most, if not all poor men, desire to be rich; whence it may be argued, that, in all appearance, the advantage lieth on the side of wealth, because both parties agree in preferring it before poverty. But this reasoning will be found to be false; for I lay it down as a certain truth, that God Almighty hath placed all men upon an equal foot, with respect to their happiness in this world, and the capacity of attaining their salvation in the next; or, at least, if there be any difference, it is not to the advantage of the rich and the mighty. Now, since a great part of those who usually make up our congregations are not of considerable station, and many among them of the lower sort, and since the meaner people are generally and justly charged with the sin of repining and murmuring at their own condition, to which, however, their betters are sufficiently subject (although, perhaps, for shame, not always so loud in their complaints,) I thought it might be useful to reason upon this point in as plain a manner as I can. I shall therefore show, first, that the poor enjoy many temporal blessings, which are not common to the rich and the great: and likewise, that the rich and the great are subject to many temporal evils, which are not common to the poor.

But here I would not be misunderstood; perhaps, there is not a word more abused than that of the poor, or wherein the world is more generally mistaken. Among the number of those who beg in our streets, or are half-starved at home, or languish in prison for debt, there is hardly one in a hundred who doth not owe his

misfortunes to his own laziness, or drunkenness, or worse vices.

To these he owes those very diseases, which often disable him from getting his bread. Such wretches are deservedly unhappy : they can only blame themselves ; and when we are commanded to have pity on the poor, these are not understood to be of the number.

It is true, indeed, that sometimes honest endeavouring men are reduced to extreme want, even to the begging of alms, by losses, by accidents, by diseases, and old age, without any fault of their own : but these are very few in comparison of the other ; nor would their support be any sensible burden to the public, if the charity of well-disposed persons were not intercepted by those common strollers, who are most importunate, and who least deserve it. These, indeed, are properly and justly called the poor, whom it should be our study to find out and distinguish, by making them partake of our superfluity and abundance.

But neither have these any thing to do with my present subject ; for, by the poor, I only intend the honest industrious artificer, the meaner sort of tradesmen, and the labouring man, who getteth his bread by the sweat of his brows, in town or country, and who make the bulk of mankind among us.

First, I shall therefore show, that the poor (in the sense I understand the word) do enjoy many temporal blessings, which are not common to the rich and great ; and likewise, that the rich and great are subject to many temporal evils, which are not common to the poor.

Secondly, From the arguments offered to prove

the foregoing head, I shall draw some observations that may be useful for your practice.

I. As to the first: Health, we know, is generally allowed to be the best of all earthly possessions, because it is that without which we can have no satisfaction in any of the rest. For riches are of no use, if sickness taketh from us the ability of enjoying them; and power and greatness are then only a burden. Now, if we would look for health, it must be in the humble habitation of the labouring man, or industrious artificer, who earn their bread by the sweat of their brows, and usually live to a good old age, with a great degree of strength and vigour.

The refreshment of the body by sleep is another great happiness of the meaner sort. Their rest is not disturbed by the fear of thieves and robbers, nor is it interrupted by surfeits of intemperance. Labour and plain food supply the want of quieting draughts; and the wise man telleth us, that the sleep of the labouring man is sweet. As to children, which are certainly accounted of as a blessing, even to the poor, where industry is not wanting; they are an assistance to honest parents, instead of being a burden; they are healthy and strong, and fit for labour; neither is the father in fear, lest his heir should be ruined by an unequal match; nor is he solicitous about his rising in the world, farther than to be able to get his bread.

The poorer sort are not the objects of general hatred or envy; they have no twinges of ambition, nor trouble themselves with party quarrels, or state divisions. The idle rabble, who follow their ambitious leaders in such cases, do not fall within my description of the poorer sort; for it

is plain, I mean only the honest industrious poor in town or country, who are safest in times of public disturbance, in perilous seasons, and public revolutions, if they will be quiet, and do their business; for artificers and husbandmen are necessary in all governments: but, in such seasons, the rich are the public mark, because they are oftentimes of no use but to be plundered; like some sort of birds, who are good for nothing but their feathers; and so fall a prey to the strongest side.

Let us proceed, on the other side, to examine the disadvantages that the rich and the great lie under, with respect to the happiness of the present life.

First then; While health, as we have said, is the general portion of the lower sort, the gout, the dropsy, the stone, the cholic, and all other diseases, are continually haunting the palaces of the rich and the great, as the natural attendants upon laziness and luxury. Neither does the rich man eat his sumptuous fare with half the appetite and relish, that even the beggars do the crumbs which fall from his table: but, on the contrary, he is full of loathing and disgust, or at best of indifference, in the midst of plenty. Thus their intemperance shortens their lives, without pleasing their appetites.

Business, fear, guilt, design, anguish, and vexation, are continually buzzing about the curtains of the rich and the powerful, and will hardly suffer them to close their eyes, unless when they are dozed with the fumes of strong liquors.

It is a great mistake to imagine that the rich want but few things; their wants are more numerous, more craving, and urgent, than those of poorer men: for these endeavour only at the ne-

cessaries of life, which make them happy, and they think no farther: but the desire of power and wealth is endless, and therefore impossible to be satisfied with any acquisitions.

If riches were so great a blessing as they are commonly thought, they would at least have this advantage, to give their owners cheerful hearts and countenances; they would often stir them up to express their thankfulness to God, and discover their satisfaction to the world. But, in fact, the contrary to all this is true. For, where are there more cloudy brows, more melancholy hearts, or more ingratitude to their great Benefactor, than among those who abound in wealth? And indeed, it is natural that it should be so, because those men, who covet things that are hard to be got, must be hard to please; whereas a small thing maketh a poor man happy; and great losses cannot befall him.

It is likewise worth considering, how few among the rich have procured their wealth by just measures. How many owe their fortunes to the sins of their parents, how many more to their own? If men's titles were to be tried before a true court of conscience, where false swearing, and a thousand vile artifices (that are well known, and can hardly be avoided in human courts of justice) would avail nothing; how many would be ejected with infamy and disgrace! How many grow considerable by breach of trust, by bribery and corruption? how many have sold their religion, with the rights and liberties of themselves and others, for power and employments?

And it is a mistake to think, that the most hardened sinner, who oweth his possessions or titles to any such wicked arts of thieving, can have true peace of mind, under the reproaches of a

guilty conscience, and amid the cries of ruined widows and orphans.

I know not one real advantage that the rich have over the poor, except the power of doing good to others; but this is an advantage which God hath not given wicked men the grace to make use of. The wealth acquired by evil means was never employed to good ends: for that would be to divide the kingdom of Satan against itself. Whatever hath been gained by fraud, avarice, oppression, and the like, must be preserved and increased by the same methods.

I shall add but one thing more upon this head, which I hope will convince you, that God (whose thoughts are not as our thoughts) never intended riches or power to be necessary for the happiness of mankind in this life; because it is certain, that there is not one single good quality of the mind absolutely necessary to obtain them, where men are resolved to be rich at any rate; neither honour, justice, temperance, wisdom, religion, truth, nor learning; for a slight acquaintance of the world will inform us, that there have been many instances of men, in all ages, who have arrived at great possessions and great dignities, by cunning, fraud, or flattery, without any of these, or any other virtues that can be named. Now, if riches and greatness were such blessings, that good men without them could not have their share of happiness in this life; how cometh it to pass, that God should suffer them to be often dealt to the worst, and most profligate of mankind; that they should be generally procured by the most abominable means, and applied to the basest and most wicked uses? This ought not to be conceived of a just, a merciful, a wise, and almighty Being. We must therefore conclude, that wealth

and power are in their own nature, at best, but things indifferent, and that a good man may be equally happy without them; provided that he hath a sufficiency of the common blessings of human life to answer all the reasonable and virtuous demands of nature, which his industry will provide, and sobriety will prevent his wanting.—Agur's prayer, with the reasons of his wish, are full to this purpose: "Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

From what hath been said, I shall, in the second place, offer some considerations, that may be useful for your practice.

And here, I shall apply myself chiefly to those of the lower sort, for whose comfort and satisfaction this discourse is principally intended. For, having observed the great sin of those who do not abound in wealth, to be that of murmuring and repining, that God hath dealt his blessings unequally to the sons of men, I thought it would be of great use to remove out of your minds so false and wicked an opinion, by showing that your condition is really happier than most of you imagine.

First, therefore, it hath been always agreed in the world, that the present happiness of mankind consisted in the ease of our body, and the quiet of our mind; but, from what hath been already said, it plainly appears, that neither wealth nor power do in any sort contribute to either of these two blessings. If, on the contrary, by multiplying our desires, they increase our discontents; if they destroy our health, gall us with painful dis-

eases, and shorten our life ; if they expose us to hatred, to envy, to censure, to a thousand temptations, it is not easy to see why a wise man should make them his choice, for their own sake, although it were in his power. Would any of you who are in health and strength of body, with moderate food and raiment, earned by your own labour, rather choose to be in the rich man's bed, under the torture of the gout, unable to take your natural rest, or natural nourishment, with the additional load of a guilty conscience, reproaching you for injustice, oppressions, covetousness and fraud? No; but you would take the riches and power, and leave behind the inconveniencies that attend them; and so would every man living. But that is more than our share, and God never intended this world for such a place of rest as we would make it; for the scripture assureth us that it was only designed as a place of trial. Nothing is more frequent than a man to wish himself in another's condition; yet he seldom doth it without some reserve: he would not be so old; he would not be so sickly; he would not be so cruel; he would not be so insolent; he would not be so vicious; he would not be so oppressive, so griping, and so on. Whence it is plain, that, in their own judgment, men are not so unequally dealt with as they would at first sight imagine; for if I would not change my condition with another man, without any exception or reservation at all, I am in reality more happy than he.

Secondly, You of the meaner sort are subject to fewer temptations than the rich; and therefore your vices are more unpardonable. Labour subdueth your appetites to be satisfied with common things; the business of your several callings filleth

up your whole time ; so that idleness, which is the bane and destruction of virtue, doth not lead you into the neighbourhood of sin : your passions are cooler, by not being inflamed with excess, and therefore the gate and the way that lead to life, are not so strait or so narrow to you, as to those who live among all the allurements to wickedness. To serve God with the best of your care and understanding, and to be just and true in your dealings, is the short sum of your duty, and will be the more strictly required of you, because nothing lieth in the way to divert you from it.

Thirdly, It is plain from what I have said, that you of the lower rank have no just reason to complain of your condition : because, as you plainly see, it affordeth you so many advantages, and freeth you from so many vexations, so many distempers both of body and mind, which pursue and torment the rich and powerful.

Fourthly, You are to remember and apply, that the poorest person is not excused from doing good to others, and even relieving the wants of his distressed neighbour, according to his abilities ; and if you perform your duty in this point, you far outdo the greatest liberalities of the rich, and will accordingly be accepted of by God, and get your reward : for it is our Saviour's own doctrine, when the widow gave her two mites. The rich give out of their abundance ; that is to say, what they give, they do not feel it in their way of living : but the poor man, who giveth out of his little stock, must spare it from the necessary food and raiment of himself and his family. And therefore our Saviour adds, " That the widow gave more than all who went before her ; for she gave all she had, even all her living ;" and so went home utterly unprovided to supply her necessities.

Lastly, As it appeareth from what hath been said, that you of the lower rank have in reality a greater share of happiness, your work of salvation is easier, by your being liable to fewer temptations; and as your reward in heaven is much more certain than it is to the rich, if you seriously perform your duty, for yours is the kingdom of heaven: so your neglect of it will be less excusable, will meet with fewer allowances from God, and will be punished with double stripes; for, the most unknowing among you cannot plead ignorance in what you have been so early taught, I hope so often instructed in, and which is so easy to be understood, I mean the art of leading a life agreeable to the plain and positive laws of God. Perhaps you may think you lie under one disadvantage, which the great and rich have not; that idleness will certainly reduce you to beggary: whereas those who abound in wealth, lie under no necessity either of labour or temperance, to keep enough to live on. But this is indeed one part of your happiness, that the lowness of your condition in a manner forceth you to what is pleasing to God, and necessary for your daily support. Thus your duty and interest are always the same.

To conclude; Since our blessed Lord, instead of a rich and honourable station in this world, was pleased to choose his lot among men of the lower condition; let not those on whom the bounty of Providence hath bestowed wealth and honours, despise the men who are placed in an humble and inferior station; but rather with their utmost power, by their countenance, by their protection, by just payment of their honest labour, encourage their daily endeavours for the virtuous support of themselves and their families. On the

other hand, let the poor labour to provide things honest in the sight of all men; and so, with diligence in their several employments, live soberly, righteously, and godlily, in this present world, that they may obtain that glorious reward promised in the gospel to the poor, I mean the kingdom of heaven.

Now to God the Father, &c.

SERMON IX.
ON THE CAUSES OF THE
WRETCHED CONDITION OF IRELAND.*

PSALM cxliv. 13, 14.

*That there be no complaining in our streets. Happy
is the people that is in such a case.*

IT is a very melancholy reflection, that such a country as ours, which is capable of producing all things necessary, and most things convenient for life, sufficient for the support of four times the number of its inhabitants, should yet lie under the heaviest load of misery and want; our streets crowded with beggars, so many of our lower sort of tradesmen, labourers, and artificers, not able to find clothes and food for their families.

I think it may therefore be of some use to lay

* This is not very properly styled a sermon; but, considered as a political dissertation, it has great merit, and it is highly worthy of the subject, and the author. Most of the circumstances here founded upon, as the causes of national distress, are the subject of separate disquisitions in those political writings connected with Ireland. But they are here summed up, and brought into one view, and the opinions expressed form a sort of index to the Dean's tenets upon the state of that country.

before you the chief causes of this wretched condition we are in, and then it will be easier to assign what remedies are in our power, toward removing at least some part of these evils.

For, it is ever to be lamented, that we lie under many disadvantages, not by our own faults, which are peculiar to ourselves, and of which no other nation under heaven hath any reason to complain.

I shall, therefore, first mention some causes of our miseries, which I doubt are not to be remedied, until God shall put it in the hearts of those who are the stronger, to allow us the common rights and privileges of brethren, fellow-subjects, and even of mankind.

The first cause of our misery is, the intolerable hardships we lie under in every branch of trade, by which we are become as hewers of wood and drawers of water, to our rigorous neighbours.

The second cause of our miserable state is, the folly, the vanity, and ingratitude, of those vast numbers, who think themselves too good to live in the country which gave them birth, and still gives them bread; and rather choose to pass their days, and consume their wealth, and draw out the very vitals of their mother kingdom, among those who heartily despise them.

These I have but lightly touched on, because I fear they are not to be redressed, and besides, I am very sensible how ready some people are to take offence at the honest truth; and for that reason, I shall omit several other grievances, under which we are long likely to groan.

I shall therefore go on to relate some other causes of this nation's poverty, by which, if they

continue much longer, it must infallibly sink to utter ruin.

The first is, that monstrous pride and vanity in both sexes, especially the weaker sex, who, in the midst of poverty, are suffered to run into all kind of expense, and extravagance in dress, and particularly priding themselves to wear nothing but what cometh from abroad, disdainng the growth or manufacture of their own country, in those articles with which they can be better served at home at half the expense; and this is grown to such a height, that they will carry the whole yearly rent of a good estate at once on their body. And as there is in that sex a spirit of envy, by which they cannot endure to see others in a better habit than themselves, so those, whose fortunes can hardly support their families in the necessaries of life, will needs vie with the richest and greatest among us, to the ruin of themselves and their posterity.

Neither are the men less guilty of this pernicious folly, who, in imitation of a gaudiness and foppery of dress, introduced of late years into our neighbouring kingdom, (as fools are apt to imitate only the defects of their betters) cannot find materials in their own country worthy to adorn their bodies of clay, while their minds are naked of every valuable quality.

Thus our tradesmen and shopkeepers, who deal in home goods, are left in a starving condition, and only those encouraged who ruin the kingdom by importing among us foreign vanities.

Another cause of our low condition is, our great luxury; the chief support of which is, the materials of it brought to the nation in exchange for the few valuable things left us, whereby so

many thousand families want the very necessaries of life.

Thirdly, In most parts of this kingdom the natives are, from their infancy, so given up to idleness and sloth, that they often choose to beg or steal, rather than support themselves with their own labour; they marry without the least view or thought of being able to make any provision for their families: and whereas, in all industrious nations, children are looked on as a help to their parents; with us, for want of being early trained to work, they are an intolerable burden at home, and a grievous charge upon the public: as appeareth from the vast number of ragged and naked children in town and country, led about by strolling women, trained up in ignorance, and all manner of vice.

Lastly, A great cause of this nation's misery is, that Egyptian bondage of cruel, oppressing, covetous landlords; expecting that all who live under them should make bricks without straw; who grieve and envy when they see a tenant of their own in a whole coat, or able to afford one comfortable meal in a month; by which the spirits of the people are broken, and made fit for slavery: the farmers and cottagers, almost through the whole kingdom, being, to all intents and purposes, as real beggars, as any of those to whom we give our charity in the streets. And these cruel landlords are every day unpeopling the kingdom, by forbidding their miserable tenants to till the earth, against common reason and justice, and contrary to the practice and prudence of all other nations; by which, numberless families have been forced either to leave the kingdom, or stroll about, and increase the number of our thieves and beggars.

Such, and much worse, is our condition at present, if I had leisure or liberty to lay it before you; and, therefore, the next thing which might be considered is, whether there may be any probable remedy found, at least against some part of these evils; for most of them are wholly desperate.

But this being too large a subject to be now handled, and the intent of my discourse confining me to give some directions concerning the poor of the city, I shall keep myself within those limits. It is indeed in the power of the lawgivers to found a school in every parish of the kingdom, for teaching the meaner and poorer sort of children to speak and to read the English tongue, and to provide a reasonable maintenance for the teachers. This would, in time, abolish that part of barbarity and ignorance, for which our natives are so despised by all foreigners: this would bring them to think and act according to the rules of reason, by which a spirit of industry, and thrift, and honesty would be introduced among them. And, indeed, considering how small a tax would suffice for such a work, it is a public scandal that such a thing should never have been endeavoured, or perhaps so much as thought on.

To supply the want of such a law, several pious persons, in many parts of this kingdom, have been prevailed on, by the great endeavours and good example set them by the clergy, to erect charity-schools in several parishes, to which very often the richest parishioners contribute the least. In those schools, children are, or ought to be, trained up to read and write, and cast accounts; and these children should, if possible, be of honest parents, gone to decay through age, sickness, or other unavoidable calamity, by the hand of God;

not the brood of wicked strollers ; for it is by no means reasonable that the charity of well-inclined people should be applied to encourage the lewdness of those profligate, abandoned women, who crowd our streets with their borrowed or spurious issue.

In those hospitals which have good foundations and rents to support them, whereof, to the scandal of Christianity, there are very few in this kingdom ; I say, in such hospitals, the children maintained ought to be only of decayed citizens and freemen, and be bred up to good trades. But in these small parish charity-schools, which have no support but the casual good-will of charitable people, I do altogether disapprove the custom of putting the children apprentice, except to the very meanest trades ; otherwise the poor honest citizen, who is just able to bring up his child, and pay a small sum of money with him to a good master, is wholly defeated, and the bastard issue, perhaps of some beggar, preferred before him. And hence we come to be so overstocked with apprentices and journeymen, more than our discouraged country can employ ; and, I fear, the greatest part of our thieves, pickpockets, and other vagabonds, are of this number.

Therefore, in order to make these parish charity-schools of great and universal use, I agree with the opinion of many wise persons, that a new turn should be given to this whole matter.

I think there is no complaint more just than what we find in almost every family, of the folly and ignorance, the fraud and knavery, the idleness and viciousness, the wasteful squandering temper of servants ; who are, indeed, become one of the many public grievances of the kingdom ; whereof, I believe, there are few masters that now

hear me, who are not convinced by their own experience. And I am very confident, that more families, of all degrees, have been ruined by the corruptions of servants, than by all other causes put together. Neither is this to be wondered at, when we consider from what nurseries so many of them are received into our houses. The first is the tribe of wicked boys, wherewith most corners of this town are pestered, who haunt public doors. These, having been born of beggars, and bred to pilfer as soon as they can go or speak, as years come on, are employed in the lowest offices to get themselves bread, are practised in all manner of villany, and when they are grown up, if they are not entertained in a gang of thieves, are forced to seek for a service. The other nursery is the barbarous and desert part of the country, from whence such lads come up hither to seek their fortunes, who are bred up from the dunghill in idleness, ignorance, lying, and thieving. From these two nurseries, I say, a great number of our servants come to us, sufficient to corrupt all the rest. Thus the whole race of servants in this kingdom have gotten so ill a reputation, that some persons from England, come over hither into great stations, are said to have absolutely refused admitting any servant born among us into their families. Neither can they be justly blamed: for, although it is not impossible to find an honest native fit for a good service, yet the inquiry is too troublesome, and the hazard too great, for a stranger to attempt.

If we consider the many misfortunes that befall private families, it will be found that servants are the causes and instruments of them all. Are our goods embezzled, wasted, and destroyed? is our house burnt to the ground? it is by the sloth, the

drunkenness, or the villany of servants. Are we robbed and murdered in our beds? it is by confederacy with our servants. Are we engaged in quarrels and misunderstandings with our neighbours? these were all begun and inflamed by the false, malicious tongues of our servants. Are the secrets of our family betrayed, and evil repute spread of us? our servants were the authors. Do false accusers rise up against us? (an evil too frequent in this country)—they have been tampering with our servants. Do our children discover folly, malice, pride, cruelty, revenge, undutifulness in their words and actions? are they seduced to lewdness or scandalous marriages? it is all by our servants. Nay, the very mistakes, follies, blunders, and absurdities of those in our service, are able to ruffle and discompose the mildest nature, and are often of such consequence as to put whole families into confusion.

Since, therefore, not only our domestic peace and quiet, and the welfare of our children, but even the very safety of our lives, reputations, and fortunes, have so great a dependence upon the choice of our servants, I think it would well become the wisdom of the nation to make some provision in so important an affair. But in the mean time, and perhaps to better purpose, it were to be wished, that the children of both sexes, entertained in the parish charity-schools, were bred up in such a manner, as would give them a teachable disposition, and qualify them to learn whatever is required in any sort of service. For instance, they should be taught to read and write, to know somewhat in casting accounts, to understand the principles of religion, to practise cleanliness, to get a spirit of honesty, industry, and thrift, and be severely punished for every neglect

in any of these particulars. For it is the misfortune of mankind, that if they are not used to be taught in their early childhood, whereby to acquire what I call a teachable disposition, they cannot, without great difficulty, learn the easiest thing in the course of their lives, but are always awkward and unhandy; their minds, as well as bodies, for want of early practice, growing stiff and unmanageable; as we observe in the sort of gentlemen, who, kept from school by the indulgence of their parents but a few years, are never able to recover the time they have lost, and grow up in ignorance and all manner of vice, whereof we have too many examples all over the nation. But to return to what I was saying: If these charity children were trained up in the manner I mentioned, and then bound apprentices in the families of gentlemen and citizens (for which a late law giveth great encouragement), being accustomed from their first entrance to be always learning some useful thing, they would learn, in a month, more than another, without those advantages, can do in a year; and, in the mean time, be very useful in a family, as far as their age and strength would allow. And when such children come to years of discretion, they will probably be a useful example to their fellow-servants; at least they will prove a strong check upon the rest, for I suppose every body will allow, that one good, honest, diligent servant in a house, may prevent abundance of mischief in the family.

These are the reasons for which I urge this matter so strongly, and I hope those who listen to me will consider them.

I shall now say something about that great number of poor, who, under the name of common beggars, infest our streets, and fill our ears with

their continual cries, and craving importunity. This I shall venture to call an unnecessary evil, brought upon us from the gross neglect, and want of proper management, in those whose duty it is to prevent it. But, before I proceed farther, let me humbly presume to vindicate the justice and mercy of God, and his dealings with mankind. Upon this particular he hath not dealt so hardly with his creatures as some would imagine, when they see so many miserable objects ready to perish for want: for, it would infallibly be found, upon strict inquiry, that there is hardly one in twenty of those miserable objects, who do not owe their present poverty to their own faults, to their present sloth and negligence, to their indiscreet marriage, without the least prospect of supporting a family, to their foolish expensiveness, to their drunkenness and other vices, by which they have squandered their gettings, and contracted diseases in their old age. And, to speak freely, is it any way reasonable or just, that those who have denied themselves many lawful satisfactions and conveniencies of life, from a principle of conscience as well as prudence, that they might not be a burden to the public, should be charged with supporting others, who have brought themselves to less than a morsel of bread, by their idleness, extravagance, and vice? Yet such, and no other, are far the greatest number not only of those who beg in our streets, but even of what we call poor decayed housekeepers, whom we are apt to pity as real objects of charity, and distinguish them from common beggars, although, in truth, they both owe their undoing to the same causes; only the former are too nicely bred to endure walking half naked in the streets, or too proud to own their wants. For the artificer, or

other tradesman, who pleadeth he is grown too old to work or look after business, and therefore expecteth assistance as a decayed housekeeper; may we not ask him, why he did not take care, in his youth and strength of days, to make some provision against old age, when he saw so many examples before him of people undone by their idleness and vicious extravagance? And to go a little higher, whence cometh it that so many citizens and shopkeepers, of the most creditable trade, who once made a good figure, go to decay by their expensive pride and vanity, affecting to educate and dress their children above their abilities, or the state of life they ought to expect?

However, since the best of us have too many infirmities to answer for, we ought not to be severe upon those of others; and, therefore, if our brother, through grief, or sickness, or other incapacity, is not in a condition to preserve his being, we ought to support him to the best of our power, without reflecting over seriously on the causes that brought him to his misery. But in order to this, and to turn our charity into its proper channel, we ought to consider who and where those objects are, whom it is chiefly incumbent upon us to support.

By the ancient law of this realm, still in force, every parish is obliged to maintain its own poor; which, although some may think to be not very equal, because many parishes are very rich, and have few poor among them, and others the contrary; yet, I think, may be justly defended: for, as to remote county parishes, in the desert part of the kingdom, the necessaries of life are there so cheap, that the infirm poor may be provided for with little burden to the inhabitants. But in

what I am going to say, I shall confine myself only to this city; where we are overrun not only with our own poor, but with a far greater number from every part of the nation. Now, I say, this evil of being encumbered with so many foreign beggars, who have not the least title to our charity, and whom it is impossible for us to support, may be easily remedied, if the government of this city, in conjunction with the clergy and parish officers, would think it worth their care; and I am sure few things deserve it better. For if every parish would take a list of those begging poor which properly belong to it, and compel each of them to wear a badge, marked and numbered, so as to be seen and known by all they meet, and confine them to beg within the limits of their own parish, severely punishing them when they offend, and driving out all interlopers from other parishes, we could then make a computation of their numbers; and the strollers from the country being driven away, the remainder would not be too many for the charity of those who pass by to maintain; neither would any beggar, although confined to his own parish, be hindered from receiving the charity of the whole town; because, in this case, those well-disposed persons who walk the streets, will give their charity to such whom they think proper objects, wherever they meet them, provided they are found in their own parishes, and wearing their badges of distinction. And, as to those parishes which border upon the skirts and suburbs of the town, where country strollers are used to harbour themselves, they must be forced to go back to their homes, when they find nobody to relieve them, because they want that mark which only gives them li-

cence to beg. Upon this point, it were to be wished that inferior parish officers had better encouragement given them to perform their duty in driving away all beggars, who do not belong to the parish, instead of conniving at them, as it is said they do, for some small contribution; for the whole city would save much more by ridding themselves of many hundred beggars, than they would lose by giving parish officers a reasonable support.

It should seem a strange, unaccountable thing, that those who have probably been reduced to want by riot, lewdness, and idleness, although they have assurance enough to beg alms publicly from all they meet, should yet be too proud to wear the parish badge, which would turn so much to their own advantage, by ridding them of such great numbers, who now intercept the greatest part of what belongeth to them: yet it is certain, that there are very many who publicly declare they will never wear those badges, and many others who either hide or throw them away: but the remedy for this is very short, easy, and just, by trying them like vagabonds and sturdy beggars, and forcibly driving them out of the town.

Therefore, as soon as this expedient of wearing badges shall be put in practice, I do earnestly exhort all those who hear me, never to give their alms to any public beggar, who doth not fully comply with this order; by which our number of poor will be so reduced that it will be much easier to provide for the rest. Our shop doors will be no longer crowded with so many thieves and pickpockets, in beggars' habits, nor our streets so dangerous to those who are forced to walk in the night.

Thus I have, with great freedom, delivered my thoughts upon this subject, which so nearly concerneth us. It is certainly a bad scheme, to any Christian country, which God hath blessed with fruitfulness, and where the people enjoy the just rights and privileges of mankind, that there should be any beggars at all. But, alas! among us, where the whole nation itself is almost reduced to beggary, by the disadvantages we lie under, and the hardships we are forced to bear; the laziness, ignorance, thoughtlessness, squandering temper, slavish nature, and uncleanly manner of living in the poor popish natives, together with the cruel oppressions of their landlords, who delight to see their vassals in the dust; I say, that in such a nation, how can we otherwise expect than to be overrun with objects of misery and want? Therefore, there can be no other method to free this city from so intolerable a grievance, than by endeavouring, as far as in us lies, that the burden may be more equally divided, by contributing to maintain our own poor, and forcing the strollers and vagabonds to return to their several homes in the country, there to smite the conscience of those oppressors who first stripped them of all their substance.

I might here, if the time would permit, offer many arguments to persuade to works of charity; but you hear them so often from the pulpit, that I am willing to hope you may not now want them. Besides, my present design was only to show where your alms would be best bestowed, to the honour of God, your own ease and advantage, the service of your country, and the benefit of the poor. I desire you will weigh and consider what I have spoken, and according to your

several stations and abilities, endeavour to put it in practice; and God give you good success. To whom, with the Son and Holy Ghost, be all honour, &c.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

SERMON X.

ON

SLEEPING IN CHURCH.*

ACTS, XX. 9.

And there sat in the window a certain young man, named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep; and while Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

I HAVE chosen these words with design, if possible, to disturb some part in this audience of half an hour's sleep, for the convenience and exercise whereof, this place, at this season of the day, is very much celebrated.

* If the following discourse did not prove a lasting and effectual cure of the malady referred to in the Dean's congregation, it must be allowed at least to have possessed the merit of a temporary remedy; since it is hardly possible to conceive that any one should indulge in slumber during the delivery.

There is, indeed, one mortal disadvantage to which all preaching is subject; that those who, by the wickedness of their lives, stand in greatest need, have usually the smallest share; for either they are absent upon the account of idleness, or spleen, or hatred to religion, or in order to doze away the intemperance of the week: or, if they do come, they are sure to employ their minds rather any other way, than regarding or attending to the business of the place.

The accident which happened to this young man in the text, hath not been sufficient to discourage his successors: but, because the preachers now in the world, however they may exceed St Paul in the art of setting men to sleep, do extremely fall short of him in the working of miracles; therefore men are become so cautious, as to choose more safe and convenient stations and postures for taking their repose, without hazard of their persons; and upon the whole matter, choose rather to trust their destruction to a miracle, than their safety. However, this being not the only way by which the lukewarm Christians and scorners of the age discover their neglect and contempt of preaching, I shall enter expressly into consideration of this matter, and order my discourse in the following method:

First, I shall produce several instances to show the great neglect of preaching now among us.

Secondly, I shall reckon up some of the usual quarrels men have against preaching.

Thirdly, I shall set forth the great evil of this neglect and contempt of preaching, and discover the real causes whence it proceedeth.

Lastly, I shall offer some remedies against this great and spreading evil.

First, I shall produce certain instances to show the great neglect of preaching now among us.

These may be reduced under two heads. First, men's absence from the service of the church; and secondly, their misbehaviour when they are here.

The first instance of men's neglect, is in their frequent absence from the church.

There is no excuse so trivial, that will not pass upon some men's consciences to excuse their attendance at the public worship of God. Some are so unfortunate as to be always indisposed on the Lord's-day, and think nothing so unwholesome as the air of a church. Others have their affairs so oddly contrived, as to be always unluckily prevented by business. With some it is a great mark of wit and deep understanding to stay at home on Sundays. Others again discover strange fits of laziness, that seize them particularly on that day, and confine them to their beds. Others are absent out of mere contempt of religion. And, lastly, there are not a few who look upon it as a day of rest, and therefore claim the privilege of their cattle, to keep the sabbath by eating, drinking, and sleeping, after the toil and labour of the week. Now in all this, the worst circumstance is, that these persons are such, whose companies are most required, and who stand most in need of a physician.

Secondly, Men's great neglect and contempt of preaching appear by their misbehaviour when at church.

If the audience were to be ranked under several heads, according to their behaviour when the word of God is delivered, how small a number would appear of those who receive it as they ought! How much of the seed then sown would

be found to fall by the way-side, upon stony ground, or among thorns; and how little good ground there would be to take it! A preacher cannot look round from the pulpit, without observing that some are in a perpetual whisper, and, by their air and gesture, give occasion to suspect that they are in those very minutes defaming their neighbour. Others have their eyes and imagination constantly engaged in such a circle of objects, perhaps to gratify the most unwarrantable desires, that they never once attend to the business of the place; the sound of the preacher's words do not so much as once interrupt them. Some have their minds wandering among idle, worldly, or vicious thoughts. Some lie at catch to ridicule whatever they hear, and with much wit and humour provide a stock of laughter, by furnishing themselves from the pulpit. But, of all misbehaviour, none is comparable to that of those who come here to sleep. Opium is not so stupefying to many persons as an afternoon sermon. Perpetual custom hath so brought it about, that the words of whatever preacher, become only a sort of uniform sound at a distance, than which nothing is more effectual to lull the senses. For that it is the very sound of the sermon which bindeth up their faculties, is manifest from hence, because they all awake so very regularly as soon as it ceaseth, and with much devotion receive the blessing, dozed and besotted with indecencies I am ashamed to repeat.

I proceed, secondly, to reckon up some of the usual quarrels men have against preaching, and to show the unreasonableness of them.

Such unwarrantable behaviour as I have described among Christians, in the house of God, in

a solemn assembly, while their faith and duty are explained and delivered, have put those who are guilty upon inventing some excuses to extenuate their fault: this they do by turning the blame either upon the particular preacher, or upon preaching in general. First, they object against the particular preacher; his manner, his delivery, his voice, are disagreeable; his style and expression are flat and slow; sometimes improper and absurd; the matter is heavy, trivial, and insipid; sometimes despicable and perfectly ridiculous; or else, on the other side, he runs up into unintelligible speculation, empty notions, and abstracted flights, all clad in words above usual understandings.

Secondly, They object against preaching in general; it is a perfect road of talk; they know already whatever can be said; they have heard the same a hundred times over. They quarrel that preachers do not relieve an old beaten subject with wit and invention; and that now the art is lost of moving men's passions, so common among the ancient orators of Greece and Rome. These, and the like objections, are frequently in the mouths of men who despise the foolishness of preaching. But let us examine the reasonableness of them.

The doctrine delivered by all preachers is the same: "So we preach, and so ye believe:" But the manner of delivering is suited to the skill and abilities of each, which differ in preachers, just as in the rest of mankind. However, in personal dislikes of a particular preacher, are these men sure they are always in the right? do they consider how mixed a thing is every audience, whose taste and judgment differ, perhaps, every day, not only from each other, but themselves?

and how to calculate a discourse that shall exactly suit them all, is beyond the force and reach of human reason, knowledge, or invention. Wit and eloquence are shining qualities, that God hath imparted, in great degrees, to very few; nor any more to be expected, in the generality of any rank among men, than riches and honour. But farther: if preaching in general be all old and beaten, and that they are already so well acquainted with it, more shame and guilt to them who so little edify by it. But, these men, whose ears are so delicate as not to endure a plain discourse of religion, who expect a constant supply of wit and eloquence on a subject handled so many thousand times; what will they say when we turn the objection upon themselves, who with all the rude and profane liberty of discourse they take, upon so many thousand subjects, are so dull as to furnish nothing but tedious repetitions, and little paltry, nauseous common-places, so vulgar, so worn, or so obvious, as, upon any other occasion but that of advancing vice, would be hooted off the stage? Nor, lastly, are preachers justly blamed for neglecting human oratory to move the passions, which is not the business of a Christian orator, whose office it is only to work upon faith and reason. All other eloquence hath been a perfect cheat, to stir up men's passions against truth and justice, for the service of a faction; to put false colours upon things, and by an amusement of agreeable words, make the worst reason appear to be the better. This is certainly not to be allowed in Christian eloquence, and, therefore, St Paul took quite the other course; he "came not with the excellency of words, or enticing speech of men's wisdom, but in plain evidence of the Spirit and power." And perhaps it

was for that reason the young man, Eutychus, used to the Grecian eloquence, grew tired, and fell so fast asleep.

I go on, *Thirdly*, to set forth the great evil of this neglect and scorn of preaching, and to discover the real causes whence it proceedeth.

I think it is obvious, that this neglect of preaching hath very much occasioned the great decay of religion among us. To this may be imputed no small part of that contempt some men bestow on the clergy ; for, whoever talketh without being regarded, is sure to be despised. To this we owe, in a great measure, the spreading of atheism and infidelity among us ; for religion, like all other things, is soonest put out of countenance by being ridiculed. The scorn of preaching might perhaps have been at first introduced by men of nice ears and refined taste ; but it is now become a spreading evil, through all degrees, and both sexes ; for, since sleeping, talking, and laughing, are qualities sufficient to furnish out a critic, the meanest and most ignorant have set up a title, and succeeded in it as well as their betters. Thus are the last efforts of reforming mankind rendered wholly useless. “ How shall they hear,” saith the apostle, “ without a preacher ? ” But, if they have a preacher, and make it a point of wit or breeding not to hear him, what remedy is left ? To this neglect of preaching we may also entirely impute that gross ignorance among us in the very principles of religion, which it is amazing to find in persons who very much value their own knowledge and understanding in other things : yet it is a visible, inexcusable ignorance, even in the meanest among us, considering the many advantages they have of learning their duty. And it hath been the great

encouragement to all manner of vice: for in vain we preach down sin to a people, "whose hearts are waxed gross, whose ears are dull of hearing, and whose eyes are closed." Therefore Christ himself, in his discourses, frequently rouseth up the attention of the multitude, and of his disciples themselves, with this expression, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." But, among all neglects of preaching, none is so fatal as that of sleeping in the house of God. A scorner may listen to truth and reason, and in time grow serious; an unbeliever may feel the pangs of a guilty conscience; one whose thoughts or eyes wander among other objects, may, by a lucky word, be called back to attention: but the sleeper shuts up all avenues to his soul: he is "like the deaf adder that hearkeneth not to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." And we may preach with as good success to the grave that is under his feet.

But the great evil of this neglect will farther yet appear, from considering the real causes whence it proceedeth; whereof, the first, I take to be an evil conscience. Many men come to church to save or gain a reputation, or because they will not be singular, but comply with an established custom; yet, all the while, they are loaded with the guilt of old rooted sins. These men can expect to hear of nothing but terrors and threatenings, their sins laid open in true colours, and eternal misery the reward of them; therefore no wonder they stop their ears, and divert their thoughts, and seek any amusement rather than stir the hell within them.

Another cause of this neglect is, a heart set upon worldly things. Men whose minds are much enslaved to earthly affairs all the week, cannot

disengage or break the chain of their thoughts so suddenly, as to apply to a discourse that is wholly foreign to what they have most at heart. Tell a usurer of charity, and mercy, and restitution, you talk to the deaf: his heart and soul, with all his senses, are got among his bags, or he is gravely asleep, and dreaming of a mortgage. Tell a man of business that the cares of the world choke the good seed; that we must not encumber ourselves with much serving; that the salvation of his soul is the one thing necessary: you see, indeed, the shape of a man before you, but his faculties are all gone off among clients and papers, thinking how to defend a bad cause, or find flaws in a good one; or he weareth out the time in drowsy nods.

A third cause of the great neglect and scorn of preaching, ariseth from the practice of men who set up to decry and disparage religion; these, being zealous to promote infidelity and vice, learn a rote of buffoonery, that serveth all occasions, and refutes the strongest arguments for piety and good manners. These have a set of ridicule calculated for all sermons, and all preachers, and can be extremely witty as often as they please upon the same fund.

Let me now, in the last place, offer some remedies against this great evil.

It will be one remedy against the contempt of preaching, rightly to consider the end for which it was designed. There are many who place abundance of merit in going to church, although it be with no other prospect but that of being well entertained, wherein if they happen to fail, they return wholly disappointed. Hence it is become an impertinent vein among people of all sorts to hunt after what they call a good sermon

as if it were a matter of pastime and diversion. Our business, alas! is quite another thing; either to learn, or, at least, be reminded of our duty; to apply the doctrines delivered, compare the rules we hear with our lives and actions, and find wherein we have transgressed. These are the dispositions men should bring into the house of God, and then they will be little concerned about the preacher's wit or eloquence, nor be curious to inquire out his faults and infirmities, but consider how to correct their own.

Another remedy against the contempt of preaching is, that men would consider, whether it be not reasonable to give more allowance for the different abilities of preachers than they usually do. Refinements of style, and flights of wit, as they are not properly the business of any preacher, so they cannot possibly be the talents of all. In most other discourses, men are satisfied with sober sense and plain reason: and, as understandings usually go, even that is not over frequent. Then why they should be so over nice in expectation of eloquence, where it is neither necessary nor convenient, is hard to imagine.

Lastly, The scornors of preaching would do well to consider, that this talent of ridicule, they value so much, is a perfection very easily acquired, and applied to all things whatsoever; neither is any thing at all the worse, because it is capable of being perverted to burlesque: perhaps it may be the more perfect upon that score; since we know, the most celebrated pieces have been thus treated with greatest success. It is in any man's power to suppose a fool's cap on the wisest head, and then laugh at his own supposition. I think there are not many things cheaper than supposing and laughing; and if the uniting these two ta-

lents can bring a thing into contempt, it is hard to know where it may end.

To conclude. These considerations may, perhaps, have some effect while men are awake ; but what arguments shall we use to the sleeper ? what methods shall we take to hold open his eyes ? Will he be moved by considerations of common civility ? We know it is reckoned a point of very bad manners to sleep in private company, when, perhaps, the tedious impertinence of many talkers would render it at least as excusable as the dull-est sermon. Do they think it a small thing to watch four hours at a play, where all virtue and religion are openly reviled ; and can they not watch one half hour to hear them defended ? Is this to deal like a judge (I mean like a good judge,) to listen on one side of the cause, and sleep on the other ? I shall add but one word more : That this indecent sloth is very much owing to that luxury and excess men usually practise upon this day, by which half the service thereof is turned to sin ; men dividing their time between God and their bellies, when, after a gluttonous meal, their senses dozed and stupified, they retire to God's house to sleep out the afternoon. Surely, brethren, these things ought not so to be.

“ He that hath ears to hear let him hear.” And God give us all grace to hear and receive his holy word to the salvation of our own souls !

SERMON XI.

ON

THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD.

I COR. iii. 19.

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

IT is remarkable, that about the time of our Saviour's coming into the world, all kinds of learning flourished to a very great degree; insomuch that nothing is more frequent in the mouths of many men, even such who pretend to read and to know, that an extravagant praise and opinion of the wisdom and virtue of the Gentile sages of those days, and likewise of those ancient philosophers who went before them, whose doctrines are left upon record, either by themselves, or other writers. As far as this may be taken for granted, it may be said, that the providence of God brought this about for several very wise ends and purposes: for it is certain, that these philosophers had been a long time before searching out where to fix the true happiness of man; and not being able to agree upon any certainty about it, they could not possibly but conclude, if they judged impartially, that all their inquiries were, in the

end, but vain and fruitless; the consequence of which must be, not only an acknowledgment of the weakness of all human wisdom, but likewise an open passage hereby made, for letting in those beams of light, which the glorious sunshine of the gospel then brought into the world, by revealing those hidden truths, which they had so long before been labouring to discover, and fixing the general happiness of mankind beyond all controversy and dispute. And therefore the providence of God wisely suffered men of deep genius and learning then to arise, who should search into the truth of the gospel now made known, and canvas its doctrines with all the subtilty and knowledge they were masters of, and in the end freely acknowledge that to be the true wisdom only, "which cometh from above."

However, to make a farther inquiry into the truth of this observation, I doubt not but there is reason to think, that a great many of those encomiums given to ancient philosophers are taken upon trust, and by a sort of men who are not very likely to be at the pains of an inquiry that would employ so much time and thinking. For, the usual ends why men affect this kind of discourse, appear generally to be either out of ostentation, that they may pass upon the world for persons of great knowledge and observation; or, what is worse, there are some who highly exalt the wisdom of those Gentile sages, thereby obliquely to glance at and traduce divine revelation, and more especially that of the gospel; for the consequence they would have us draw is this: That since those ancient philosophers rose to a greater pitch of wisdom and virtue than was ever known among Christians, and all this purely upon the strength of their own reason, and liberty of

thinking, therefore it must follow, that either all revelation is false, or, what is worse, that it has depraved the nature of man, and left him worse than it found him.

But this high opinion of heathen wisdom is not very ancient in the world, nor at all countenanced from primitive times. Our Saviour had but a low esteem of it, as appears by his treatment of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who followed the doctrines of Plato and Epicurus. St Paul likewise, who was well versed in all the Grecian literature, seems very much to despise their philosophy, as we find in his writings; cautioning the Colossians to "beware lest any man spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit." And in another place, he advises Timothy to "avoid profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called;" that is, not to introduce into the Christian doctrine the janglings of those vain philosophers, which they would pass upon the world for science. And the reasons he gives are, first, That those who professed them did err concerning the faith: secondly, because the knowledge of them did increase ungodliness, vain babblings being otherwise expounded vanities, or empty sounds; that is, tedious disputes about words, which the philosophers were always so full of, and which were the natural product of disputes and dissensions between several sects.

Neither had the primitive fathers any great or good opinion of the heathen philosophy, as it is manifest from several passages in their writings: so that this vein of affecting to raise the reputation of those sages so high, is a mode and a vice but of yesterday, assumed chiefly, as I have said, to disparage revealed knowledge, and the consequences of it among us.

Now, because this is a prejudice which may prevail with some persons, so far as to lessen the influence of the gospel; and whereas, therefore, this is an opinion which men of education are likely to be encountered with, when they have produced themselves into the world; I shall endeavour to show that their preference of heathen wisdom and virtue before that of the Christian is every way unjust, and grounded upon ignorance or mistake; in order to which, I shall consider four things:

First, I shall produce certain points, wherein the wisdom and virtue of all unrevealed philosophy in general fell short, and was very imperfect.

Secondly, I shall show, in several instances, where some of the most renowned philosophers have been grossly defective in their lessons of morality.

Thirdly, I shall prove the perfection of Christian wisdom, from the proper characters and marks of it.

Lastly, I shall show that the great examples of wisdom and virtue, among the heathen wise-men, were produced by personal merit, and not influenced by the doctrine of any sect; whereas, in Christianity, it is quite the contrary.

First, I shall produce certain points, wherein the wisdom and virtue of all unrevealed philosophy in general fell short, and was very imperfect.

My design is, to persuade men, that Christian philosophy is in all things preferable to heathen wisdom; from which, or its professors, I shall,

however, have no occasion to detract. They were as wise, and as good, as it was possible for them to be under such disadvantages ; and would have probably been infinitely more so, with such aids as we enjoy : but our lessons are certainly much better, however our practices may fall short.

The first point I shall mention is, that universal defect which was in all their schemes, that they could not agree about their chief good, or wherein to place the happiness of mankind ; nor had any of them a tolerable answer upon this difficulty, to satisfy a reasonable person. For, to say, as the most plausible of them did, " that happiness consisted in virtue," was but vain babbling, and a mere sound of words, to amuse others and themselves ; because they were not agreed what this virtue was, or wherein it did consist ; and likewise, because several among the best of them taught quite different things, placing happiness in health or good fortune, in riches or in honour, where all were agreed that virtue was not, as I shall have occasion to show, when I speak of their particular tenets.

The second great defect in the Gentile philosophy, was, that it wanted some suitable reward, proportioned to the better part of man, his mind, as an encouragement for his progress in virtue. The difficulties they met with upon the score of this default were great, and not to be accounted for : bodily goods being only suitable to bodily wants, are no rest at all for the mind ; and if they were, yet are they not the proper fruits of wisdom and virtue, being equally attainable by the ignorant and wicked. Now, human nature is so constituted, that we can never pursue any thing heartily, but upon hopes of a reward. If we run
ce, it is in expectation of a prize ; and the

greater the prize, the faster we run; for an incorruptible crown, if we understand it, and believe it to be such, more than a corruptible one. But some of the philosophers gave all this quite another turn, and pretended to refine so far as to call virtue its own reward, and worthy to be followed only for itself; whereas, if there be any thing in this more than the sound of the words, it is at least too abstracted to become a universal influencing principle in the world, and therefore could not be of general use.

It was the want of assigning some happiness proportioned to the soul of man, that caused many of them, either, on the one hand, to be sour and morose, supercilious and untreatable; or, on the other, to fall into the vulgar pursuits of common men, to hunt after greatness and riches, to make their court, and to serve occasions; as Plato did to the younger Dionysius, and Aristotle to Alexander the Great. So impossible it is for a man, who looks no farther than the present world, to fix himself long in a contemplation where the present world has no part: he has no sure hold, no firm footing: he can never expect to remove the earth he rests upon, while he has no support besides for his feet, but wants, like Archimedes, some other place whereon to stand. To talk of bearing pain and grief, without any sort of present or future hope, cannot be purely greatness of spirit; there must be a mixture in it of affectation, and an allay of pride; or perhaps is wholly counterfeit.

It is true, there has been all along in the world a notion of rewards and punishments in another life: but it seems to have rather served as an entertainment to poets, or as a terror of children, than a settled principle by which men pretended

to govern any of their actions. The last celebrated words of Socrates, a little before his death, do not seem to reckon or build much upon any such opinion; and Cæsar made no scruple to disown it, and ridicule it in open senate.

Thirdly, The greatest and wisest of all their philosophers were never able to give any satisfaction to others and themselves, in their notions of a Deity. They were often extremely gross and absurd in their conceptions; and those who made the fairest conjectures, are such as were generally allowed by the learned, to have seen the system of Moses, if I may so call it, who was in great reputation at that time in the heathen world, as we find by Diodorus, Justin, Longinus, and other authors: for the rest, the wisest among them laid aside all notions after a Deity, as a disquisition vain and fruitless, which indeed it was, upon unrevealed principles; and those who ventured to engage too far, fell into incoherence and confusion.

Fourthly, Those among them who had the justest conceptions of a Divine Power, and did also admit a Providence, had no notion at all of entirely relying and depending upon either; they trusted in themselves for all things; but as for a trust or dependence upon God, they would not have understood the phrase; it made no part of the profane style.

Therefore it was, that in all issues and events which they could not reconcile to their own sentiments of reason and justice, they were quite disconcerted: they had no retreat; but upon every blow of adverse fortune, either affected to be indifferent, or grew sullen and severe, or else yielded and sunk like other men.

Having now produced certain points, wherein the wisdom and virtue of all unrevealed philosophy fell short, and was very imperfect; I go on, in the second place, to show, in several instances, where some of the most renowned philosophers have been grossly defective in their lessons of morality.

Thales, the founder of the Ionic sect, so celebrated for morality, being asked how a man might bear ill-fortune with greatest ease, answered, "By seeing his enemies in a worse condition." An answer truly barbarous, unworthy of human nature, and which included such consequences, as must destroy all society from the world.

Solon lamenting the death of a son, one told him, "You lament in vain." "Therefore," said he, "I lament, because it is in vain." This was a plain confession how imperfect all his philosophy was, and that something was still wanting. He owned that all his wisdom and morals were useless, and this upon one of the most frequent accidents in life. How much better could he have learned to support himself even from David, by his entire dependence upon God; and that, before our Saviour had advanced the notions of religion to the height and perfection wherewith he hath instructed his disciples!

Plato himself, with all his refinements, placed happiness in wisdom, health, good fortune, honour, and riches; and held that they who enjoyed all these were perfectly happy: which opinion was indeed unworthy its owner, leaving the wise and good man wholly at the mercy of uncertain chance, and to be miserable without resource.

His scholar Aristotle fell more grossly into the same notion, and plainly affirmed, "That virtue, without the goods of fortune, was not sufficient

for happiness, but that a wise man must be miserable in poverty and sickness." Nay, Diogenes himself, from whose pride and singularity one would have looked for other notions, delivered it as his opinion, "That a poor old man was the most miserable thing in life."

Zeno also and his followers fell into many absurdities, among which nothing could be greater than that of maintaining all crimes to be equal; which, instead of making vice hateful, rendered it as a thing indifferent and familiar to all men.

Lastly, Epicurus had no notion of justice, but as it was profitable; and his placing happiness in pleasure, with all the advantages he could expound it by, was liable to very great exception: for, although he taught that pleasure did consist in virtue, yet he did not any way fix or ascertain the boundaries of virtue, as he ought to have done; by which means he misled his followers into the greatest vices, making their names to become odious and scandalous, even in the heathen world.

I have produced these few instances from a great many others, to show the imperfection of heathen philosophy, wherein I have confined myself wholly to their morality. And surely we may pronounce upon it, in the words of St James, that "This wisdom descended not from above, but was earthly and sensual." What if I had produced their absurd notions about God and the soul? it would then have completed the character given it by that apostle, and appeared to have been devilish too. But it is easy to observe, from the nature of these few particulars, that their defects in morals were purely the flagging and fainting of the mind, for want of a support by revelation from God.

I proceed, therefore, in the third place, to show the perfection of Christian wisdom from above; and I shall endeavour to make it appear, from those proper characters and marks of it, by the apostle before mentioned, in the third chapter, and 15th, 16th, and 17th verses.

The words run thus :

“ This wisdom descendeth not from above ; but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

“ For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

“ But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

“ The wisdom from above is first pure.” This purity of the mind and spirit is peculiar to the gospel. Our Saviour says, “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” A mind free from all pollution of lusts shall have a daily vision of God, whereof unrevealed religion can form no notion. This is it that keeps us unspotted from the world ; and hereby many have been prevailed upon to live in the practice of all purity, holiness, and righteousness, far beyond the examples of the most celebrated philosophers.

It is “ peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated.” The Christian doctrine teacheth us all those dispositions that make us affable and courteous, gentle and kind, without any morose leaven of pride or vanity, which entered into the composition of most heathen schemes : so we are taught to be meek and lowly. Our Saviour’s last legacy was peace ; and he commands us to forgive our offending brother unto seventy times seven. Christian wisdom is full of mercy and good works, teaching the height of all moral virtues, of which

the heathens fell infinitely short. Plato, indeed, (and it is worth observing) has somewhere a dialogue, or part of one, about forgiving our enemies, which was perhaps the highest strain ever reached by man, without divine assistance; yet how little is that to what our Saviour commands us! "To love them that hate us; to bless them that curse us; and to do good to them that despitefully use us."

Christian wisdom is "without partiality;" it is not calculated for this or that nation of people, but the whole race of mankind: not so the philosophical schemes, which were narrow and confined, adapted to their peculiar towns, governments, or sects; but, "in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Lastly, It is "without hypocrisy;" it appears to be what it really is; it is all of a piece. By the doctrines of the gospel, we are so far from being allowed to publish to the world those virtues we have not, that we are commanded to hide even from ourselves those we really have, and not to let our right hand know what our left hand does; unlike several branches of the heathen wisdom, which pretended to teach insensibility and indifference, magnanimity, and contempt of life, while, at the same time, in other parts, it belied its own doctrines.

I come now, in the last place, to show that the great examples of wisdom and virtue, among the Grecian sages, were produced by personal merit, and not influenced by the doctrine of any particular sect; whereas, in Christianity, it is quite the contrary.

The two virtues most celebrated by ancient moralists, were Fortitude and Temperance, as relating to the government of man in his private capacity, to which their schemes were generally addressed and confined; and the two instances wherein those virtues arrived at the greatest height, were Socrates and Cato. But neither those, nor any other virtues possessed by these two, were at all owing to any lessons or doctrines of a sect. For Socrates himself was of none at all: and although Cato was called a stoic, it was more from a resemblance of manners in his worst qualities, than that he avowed himself one of their disciples. The same may be affirmed of many other great men of antiquity. Whence I infer, that those who were renowned for virtue among them, were more obliged to the good natural dispositions of their own minds, than to the doctrines of any sect they pretended to follow.

On the other side, as the examples of fortitude and patience among the primitive Christians, have been infinitely greater and more numerous, so they were altogether the product of their principles and doctrine; and were such as the same persons, without those aids, would never have arrived to. Of this truth most of the apostles, with many thousand martyrs, are a cloud of witnesses beyond exception. Having therefore spoken so largely upon the former heads, I shall dwell no longer upon this.

And, if it should here be objected, Why does not Christianity still produce the same effects? it is easy to answer, First, That although the number of pretended Christians be great, yet that of true believers, in proportion to the other, was never so small; and it is a true lively faith alone,

that, by the assistance of God's grace, can influence our practice.

Secondly, We may answer, that Christianity itself has very much suffered, by being blended up with Gentile philosophy. The Platonic system, first taken into religion, was thought to have given matter for some early heresies in the church. When disputes began to arise, the Peripatetic forms were introduced by Scotus, as best fitted for controversy. And, however this may now have become necessary, it was surely the author of a litigious vein, which has since occasioned very pernicious consequences, stopped the progress of Christianity, and been a great promoter of vice; verifying that sentence given by St James, and mentioned before, "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." This was the fatal stop to the Grecians, in their progress both of arts and arms; their wise men were divided under several sects, and their governments under several commonwealths, all in opposition to each other; which engaged them in eternal quarrels among themselves, while they should have been armed against the common enemy. And I wish we had no other examples, from the like causes, less foreign or ancient than that. Diogenes said, Socrates was a madman; the disciples of Zeno and Epicurus, nay of Plato and Aristotle, were engaged in fierce disputes about the most insignificant trifles. And if this be the present language and practice among us Christians, no wonder that Christianity does not still produce the same effects which it did at first, when it was received and embraced in its utmost purity and perfection: for such wisdom as this cannot "descend from above;" but must be

“earthly, sensual, devilish; full of confusion and every evil work;” whereas, “the wisdom from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” This is the true heavenly wisdom, which Christianity only can boast of, and which the greatest of the heathen wise men could never arrive at.

Now to God the Father, &c.

SERMON XII.

DOING GOOD:

A SERMON ON THE OCCASION OF WOOD'S PROJECT.*

(WRITTEN IN 1724.)

GALATIANS, vi. 10.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men.

NATURE directs every one of us, and God permits us, to consult our own private good, before the private good of any other person whatsoever. We are indeed commanded to love our neighbour

* "I did very lately, as I thought it my duty, preach to the people under my inspection, upon the subject of Mr Wood's coin; and although I never heard that my sermon gave the least offence, as I am sure none was intended, yet, if it were now printed and published, I cannot say I would insure it from the hands of the common hangman, or my person from those of a messenger." See *The Drapier's Letters, No. VI.*

"I never," said the Dean some time after in a jocular conversation, "preached but twice in my life, and they were not sermons, but pamphlets." Being asked on what subject, he replied, "They were against Wood's halfpence." See *Pilkington, vol. i. p. 56.*

The pieces relating to Ireland are those of a public nature; in
VOL. VIII.

as ourselves, but not as well as ourselves. The love we have for ourselves, is to be the pattern of that love we ought to have toward our neighbour; but, as the copy doth not equal the original, so my neighbour cannot think it hard, if I prefer myself, who am the original, before him, who is only the copy. Thus, if any matter equally concern the life, the reputation, the profit of my neighbour and my own; the law of nature, which is the law of God, obligeth me to take care of myself first, and afterward of him. And this I need not be at much pains in persuading you to; for the want of self-love, with regard to things of this world, is not among the faults of mankind. But then, on the other side, if, by a small hurt and loss to myself, I can procure a great good to my neighbour, in that case his interest is to be preferred. For example, if I can be sure of saving his life, without great danger to my own; if I can preserve him from being undone, without ruining myself; or recover his reputation, without blasting mine; all this I am obliged to do; and if I sincerely perform it, I do then obey the command of God, in loving my neighbour as myself.

But, besides this love we owe to every man in his particular capacity, under the title of our

which the Dean appears, as usual, in the best light, because they do honour to his heart as well as to his head; furnishing some additional proofs, that, though he was very free in his abuse of the inhabitants of that country, as well natives as foreigners, he had their interest sincerely at heart, and perfectly understood it. His sermon upon Doing Good, though peculiarly adapted to Ireland and Wood's designs upon it, contains perhaps the best motives to patriotism that were ever delivered within so small a compass.

neighbour, there is yet a duty of a more large extensive nature incumbent on us; which is, our love to our neighbour in his public capacity, as he is a member of that great body the commonwealth, under the same government with ourselves; and this is usually called love of the public, and is a duty to which we are more strictly obliged than even that of loving ourselves; because therein ourselves are also contained, as well as all our neighbours, in one great body. This love of the public, or of the commonwealth, or love of our country, was in ancient times properly known by the name of virtue, because it was the greatest of all virtues, and was supposed to contain all virtues in it: and many great examples of this virtue are left us on record, scarcely to be believed, or even conceived, in such a base, corrupted, wicked age as this we live in. In those times, it was common for men to sacrifice their lives for the good of their country, although they had neither hope nor belief of future rewards; whereas, in our days, very few make the least scruple of sacrificing a whole nation, as well as their own souls, for a little present gain; which often hath been known to end in their own ruin in this world, as it certainly must in that to come.

Have we not seen men, for the sake of some petty employment, give up the very natural rights and liberties of their country, and of mankind, in the ruin of which themselves must at last be involved! Are not these corruptions gotten among the meanest of our people, who, for a piece of money, will give their votes at a venture, for the disposal of their own lives and fortunes, without considering whether it be to those who

are most likely to betray or defend them? But, if I were to produce only one instance of a hundred, wherein we fail in this duty of loving our country, it would be an endless labour; and therefore I shall not attempt it.

But here I would not be misunderstood: by the love of our country, I do not mean loyalty to our king, for that is a duty of another nature; and a man may be very loyal, in the common sense of the word, without one grain of public good at his heart. Witness this very kingdom we live in. I verily believe, that since the beginning of the world, no nation upon earth ever showed (all circumstances considered) such high constant marks of loyalty, in all their actions and behaviour, as we have done: and at the same time, no people ever appeared more utterly void of what is called a public spirit. When I say the people, I mean the bulk or mass of the people; for I have nothing to do with those in power.

Therefore I shall think my time not ill spent, if I can persuade most or all of you who hear me, to show the love you have for your country, by endeavouring, in your several situations, to do all the public good you are able. For I am certainly persuaded, that all our misfortunes arise from no other original cause than that general disregard among us to the public welfare.

I therefore undertake to show you three things;

First, That there are few people so weak or mean, who have it not sometimes in their power to be useful to the public.

Secondly, That it is often in the power of the meanest among mankind to do mischief to the public.

And, *lastly*, That all wilful injuries done to the public, are very great and aggravated sins in the sight of God.

First, There are few people so weak or mean, who have it not sometimes in their power to be useful to the public.

Solomon tells us of a poor wise man, who saved a city by his counsel. It hath often happened that a private soldier, by some unexpected brave attempt, hath been instrumental in obtaining a great victory. How many obscure men have been authors of very useful inventions, whereof the world now reaps the benefit! The very example of honesty and industry in a poor tradesman, will sometimes spread through a neighbourhood, when others see how successful he is; and thus so many useful members are gained, for which the whole body of the public is the better. Whoever is blessed with a true public spirit, God will certainly put it into his way to make use of that blessing, for the ends it was given him, by some means or other: and therefore it hath been observed, in most ages, that the greatest actions for the benefit of the commonwealth, have been performed by the wisdom or courage, the contrivance or industry, of particular men, and not of numbers: and that the safety of a kingdom hath often been owing to those hands whence it was least expected.

But, *secondly*, It is often in the power of the meanest among mankind to do mischief to the public: and hence arise most of those miseries with which the states and kingdoms of the earth are infested. How many great princes have been murdered by the meanest ruffians! The weakest hand can open a flood-gate to drown a coun-

try, which a thousand of the strongest cannot stop. Those who have thrown off all regard for public good, will often have it in their way to do public evil, and will not fail to exercise that power whenever they can. The greatest blow given of late to this kingdom, was by the dishonesty of a few manufacturers ; who, by imposing bad ware at foreign markets, in almost the only traffic permitted to us, did half ruin that trade ; by which this poor unhappy kingdom now suffers in the midst of sufferings. I speak not here of persons in high stations, who ought to be free from all reflection, and are supposed always to intend the welfare of the community : but we now find by experience, that the meanest instrument may, by the concurrence of accidents, have it in his power to bring a whole kingdom to the very brink of destruction, and is at this present endeavouring to finish his work ; and hath agents among ourselves, who are contented to see their own country undone, to be small sharers in that iniquitous gain, which at last must end in their own ruin, as well as ours. I confess it was chiefly the consideration of that great danger we are in, which engaged me to discourse to you on this subject, to exhort you to a love of your country, and a public spirit, when all you have is at stake ; to prefer the interest of your prince and your fellow-subjects, before that of one destructive impostor, and a few of his adherents.

Perhaps it may be thought by some, that this way of discoursing is not so proper from the pulpit. But surely, when an open attempt is made, and far carried on, to make a great kingdom one large poorhouse, to deprive us of all means to exercise hospitality or charity, to turn our cities and churches into ruins, to make the country a

desert for wild beasts and robbers, to destroy all arts and sciences, all trades and manufactures, and the very tillage of the ground, only to enrich one obscure ill-designing projector and his followers; it is time for the pastor to cry out, "that the wolf is getting into his flock," to warn them to stand together, and all to consult the common safety. And God be praised for his infinite goodness in raising such a spirit of union among us, at least in this point, in the midst of all our former divisions; which union, if it continue, will in all probability defeat the pernicious design of this pestilent enemy to the nation!

But hence it clearly follows how necessary the love of our country, or a public spirit, is, in every particular man, since the wicked have so many opportunities of doing public mischief. Every man is upon his guard for his private advantage; but, where the public is concerned, he is apt to be negligent, considering himself only as one among two or three millions, among whom the loss is equally shared; and thus, he thinks, he can be no great sufferer. Meanwhile the trader, the farmer, and the shopkeeper, complain of the hardness and deadness of the times, and wonder whence it comes; while it is in a great measure owing to their own folly, for want of that love of their country, and public spirit and firm union among themselves, which are so necessary to the prosperity of every nation.

Another method, by which the meanest wicked man may have it in his power to injure the public, is false accusation; whereof this kingdom hath afforded too many examples: neither is it long since no man, whose opinions were thought to differ from those in fashion, could safely converse beyond his nearest friends, for fear of being

sworn against, as a traitor, by those who made a traffic of perjury and subornation; by which the very peace of the nation was disturbed, and men fled from each other as they would from a lion or a bear got loose. And it is very remarkable, that the pernicious project now in hand, to reduce us to beggary, was forwarded by one of these false accusers, who had been convicted of endeavouring, by perjury and subornation, to take away the lives of several innocent persons here among us: and, indeed, there could not be a more proper instrument for such a work.

Another method, by which the meanest people may do injury to the public, is the spreading of lies and false rumours: thus raising a distrust among the people of a nation, causing them to mistake their true interest, and their enemies for their friends: and this hath been likewise too successful a practice among us, where we have known the whole kingdom misled by the grossest lies, raised upon occasion to serve some particular turn. As it hath also happened in the case I lately mentioned, where one obscure man, by representing our wants where they were least, and concealing them where they were greatest, had almost succeeded in a project of utterly ruining this whole kingdom; and may still succeed, if God doth not continue that public spirit, which he hath almost miraculously kindled in us upon this occasion.

Thus we see the public is many times, as it were, at the mercy of the meanest instrument, who can be wicked enough to watch opportunities of doing it mischief, upon the principles of avarice or malice, which I am afraid are deeply rooted in too many breasts, and against which there can be no defence, but a firm resolution

in all honest men, to be closely united and active in showing their love to their country, by preferring the public interest to their present private advantage. If a passenger, in a great storm at sea, should hide his goods, that they might not be thrown overboard to lighten the ship, what would be the consequence? The ship is cast away, and he loses his life and goods together.

We have heard of men, who, through greediness of gain, have brought infected goods into a nation; which bred a plague, whereof the owners and their families perished first. Let those among us consider this and tremble, whose houses are privately stored with those materials of beggary and desolation, lately brought over to be scattered like a pestilence among their countrymen, which may probably first seize upon themselves and their families, until their houses shall be made a dunghill.

I shall mention one practice more, by which the meanest instruments often succeed in doing public mischief; and this is, by deceiving us with plausible arguments to make us believe that the most ruinous project they can offer is intended for our good, as it happened in the case so often mentioned. For the poor ignorant people, allured by the appearing convenience in their small dealings, did not discover the serpent in the brass, but were ready, like the Israelites, to offer incense to it; neither could the wisdom of the nation convince them, until some, of good intentions, made the cheat so plain to their sight, that those who run may read. And thus the design was to treat us, in every point, as the Philistines treated Sampson (I mean when he was betrayed by Delilah,) first to put out our eyes, and then to bind us with fetters of brass.

I proceed to the last thing I proposed, which was to show you that all wilful injuries done to the public, are very great and aggravated sins in the sight of God.

First, It is apparent from scripture, and most agreeable to reason, that the safety and welfare of nations are under the most peculiar care of God's providence. Thus he promised Abraham to save Sodom, if only ten righteous men could be found in it. Thus the reason which God gave to Jonas for not destroying Nineveh was, because there were six score thousand men in that city.

All government is from God, who is the God of order; and therefore whoever attempts to breed confusion or disturbance among a people, doth his utmost to take the government of the world out of God's hands, and to put it into the hands of the devil, who is the author of confusion. By which it is plain, that no crime, how heinous soever, committed against particular persons, can equal the guilt of him who does injury to the public.

Secondly, All offenders against their country lie under this grievous difficulty, that it is impossible to obtain a pardon or make restitution. The bulk of mankind are very quick at resenting injuries, and very slow in forgiving them: and how shall one man be able to obtain the pardon of millions, or repair the injuries he hath done to millions? How shall those, who, by a most destructive fraud, got the whole wealth of our neighbouring kingdom into their hands, be ever able to make a recompence? How will the authors and promoters of that villainous project, for the ruin of this poor country, be able to account with us for the injuries they have already done, although they should no farther succeed? The de-

plorable case of such wretches must entirely be left to the unfathomable mercies of God: for those who know the least in religion are not ignorant, that without our utmost endeavours to make restitution to the person injured, and to obtain his pardon, added to a sincere repentance, there is no hope of salvation given in the gospel.

Lastly, All offences against our own country have this aggravation, that they are ungrateful and unnatural. It is to our country we owe those laws, which protect us in our lives, our liberties, our properties, and our religion. Our country produced us into the world, and continues to nourish us, so that it is usually called our mother; and there have been examples of great magistrates, who have put their own children to death for endeavouring to betray their country, as if they had attempted the life of their natural parent.

Thus I have briefly shown you how terrible a sin it is to be an enemy to our country, in order to incite you to the contrary virtue, which at this juncture is so highly necessary, when every man's endeavour will be of use. We have hitherto been just able to support ourselves under many hardships; but now the axe is laid to the root of the tree, and nothing but a firm union among us can prevent our utter undoing. This we are obliged to, in duty to our gracious king, as well as to ourselves. Let us therefore preserve that public spirit, which God hath raised in us, for our own temporal interest. For, if this wicked project should succeed, which it cannot do but by our own folly; if we sell ourselves for nought, the merchant, the shopkeeper, the artificer, must fly to the desert with their miserable families, there to starve, or live upon rapine, or at least

exchange their country for one more hospitable than that where they were born.

Thus much I thought it my duty to say to you who are under my care, to warn you against those temporal evils which may draw the worst of spiritual evils after them; such as heart-burnings, murmurings, discontents, and all manner of wickedness, which a desperate condition of life may tempt men to.

I am sensible that what I have now said will not go very far, being confined to this assembly: but I hope it may stir up others of my brethren to exhort their several congregations, after a more effectual manner, to show their love for their country on this important occasion. And this, I am sure, cannot be called meddling in affairs of state.

I pray God protect his most gracious majesty, and his kingdom long under his government; and defend us from all ruinous projectors, deceivers, suborners, perjurers, false accusers, and oppressors; from the virulence of party and faction; and unite us in loyalty to our king, love to our country, and charity to each other.

And this we beg, for Jesus Christ's sake: to whom, &c.

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION.*

I AM in all opinions to believe according to my own impartial reason; which I am bound to inform and improve, as far as my capacities and opportunities will permit.

It may be prudent in me to act sometimes by other men's reason; but I can think only by my own.

If another man's reason fully convinces me, it becomes my own reason.

To say a man is bound to believe, is neither truth nor sense.

You may force men, by interest or punishment, to say or swear they believe, and to act as if they believed; you can go no farther.

Every man, as a member of the commonwealth, ought to be content with the possession of his own opinion in private, without perplexing his neighbour, or disturbing the public.

Violent zeal for truth, has a hundred to one odds, to be either petulancy, ambition, or pride.

* See remarks on this treatise, *Gent. Mag.* vol. xxxv. p. 372.

There is a degree of corruption, wherein some nations, as bad as the world is, will proceed to an amendment; till which time, particular men should be quiet.

To remove opinions fundamental in religion, is impossible, and the attempt wicked, whether those opinions be true or false; unless your avowed design be to abolish that religion altogether. So, for instance, in the famous doctrine of Christ's divinity, which has been universally received by all bodies of Christians, since the condemnation of Arianism under Constantine and his successors: wherefore the proceedings of the Socinians are both vain and unwarrantable; because they will be never able to advance their own opinion, or meet any other success than breeding doubts and disturbances in the world—*Qui ratione sua disturbant mœnia mundi.*

The want of belief is a defect that ought to be concealed, when it cannot be overcome.

The Christian religion, in the most early times, was proposed to the Jews and heathens without the article of Christ's divinity; which, I remember, Erasmus accounts for, by its being too strong a meat for babes. Perhaps, if it were now softened by the Chinese missionaries, the conversion of those infidels would be less difficult: and we find, by the Alcoran, it is the great stumbling block of the Mahometans. But, in a country already Christian, to bring so fundamental a point of faith into debate, can have no consequences that are not pernicious to morals and public peace.

I have been often offended to find St Paul's allegories, and other figures of Grecian eloquence, converted by divines into articles of faith.

God's mercy is over all his works ; but divines of all sorts lessen that mercy too much.

I look upon myself, in the capacity of a clergyman, to be one appointed by Providence for defending a post assigned me, and for gaining over as many enemies as I can. Although I think my cause is just ; yet one great motive is my submitting to the pleasure of Providence, and to the laws of my country.

I am not answerable to God for the doubts that arise in my own breast, since they are the consequence of that reason which he has planted in me ; if I take care to conceal those doubts from others, if I use my best endeavours to subdue them, and if they have no influence on the conduct of my life.

I believe that thousands of men would be orthodox enough in certain points, if divines had not been too curious, or too narrow, in reducing orthodoxy within the compass of subtleties, niceties, and distinctions, with little warrant from scripture, and less from reason or good policy.

I never saw, heard, nor read, that the clergy were beloved in any nation where Christianity was the religion of the country. Nothing can render them popular, but some degree of persecution.

Those fine gentlemen, who affect the humour of railing at the clergy, are, I think, bound in honour to turn parsons themselves, and show us better examples.

Miserable mortals ! can we contribute to the honour and glory of God ? I could wish that expression were struck out of our prayer books.

Liberty of conscience, properly speaking, is no more than the liberty of possessing our own

thoughts and opinions, which every man enjoys without fear of the magistrate : but how far he shall publicly act in pursuance of those opinions, is to be regulated by the laws of the country. Perhaps, in my own thoughts, I prefer a well-instituted commonwealth before a monarchy ; and I know several others of the same opinion. Now, if, upon this pretence, I should insist upon liberty of conscience, form conventicles of republicans, and print books preferring that government, and condemning what is established, the magistrate would, with great justice, hang me and my disciples. It is the same case in religion, although not so avowed ; where liberty of conscience, under the present acceptation, equally produces revolutions, or at least convulsions and disturbances, in a state ; which politicians would see well enough, if their eyes were not blinded by faction, and of which these kingdoms, as well as France, Sweden, and other countries, are flaming instances. Cromwell's notion upon that article was natural and right ; when, upon the surrender of a town in Ireland, the popish governor insisted upon an article for liberty of conscience. Cromwell said, " He meddled with no man's conscience ; but if, by liberty of conscience, the governor meant the liberty of the mass, he had express orders from the parliament of England against admitting any such liberty at all."

It is impossible that any thing so natural, so necessary, and so universal as death, should ever have been designed by Providence as an evil to mankind.

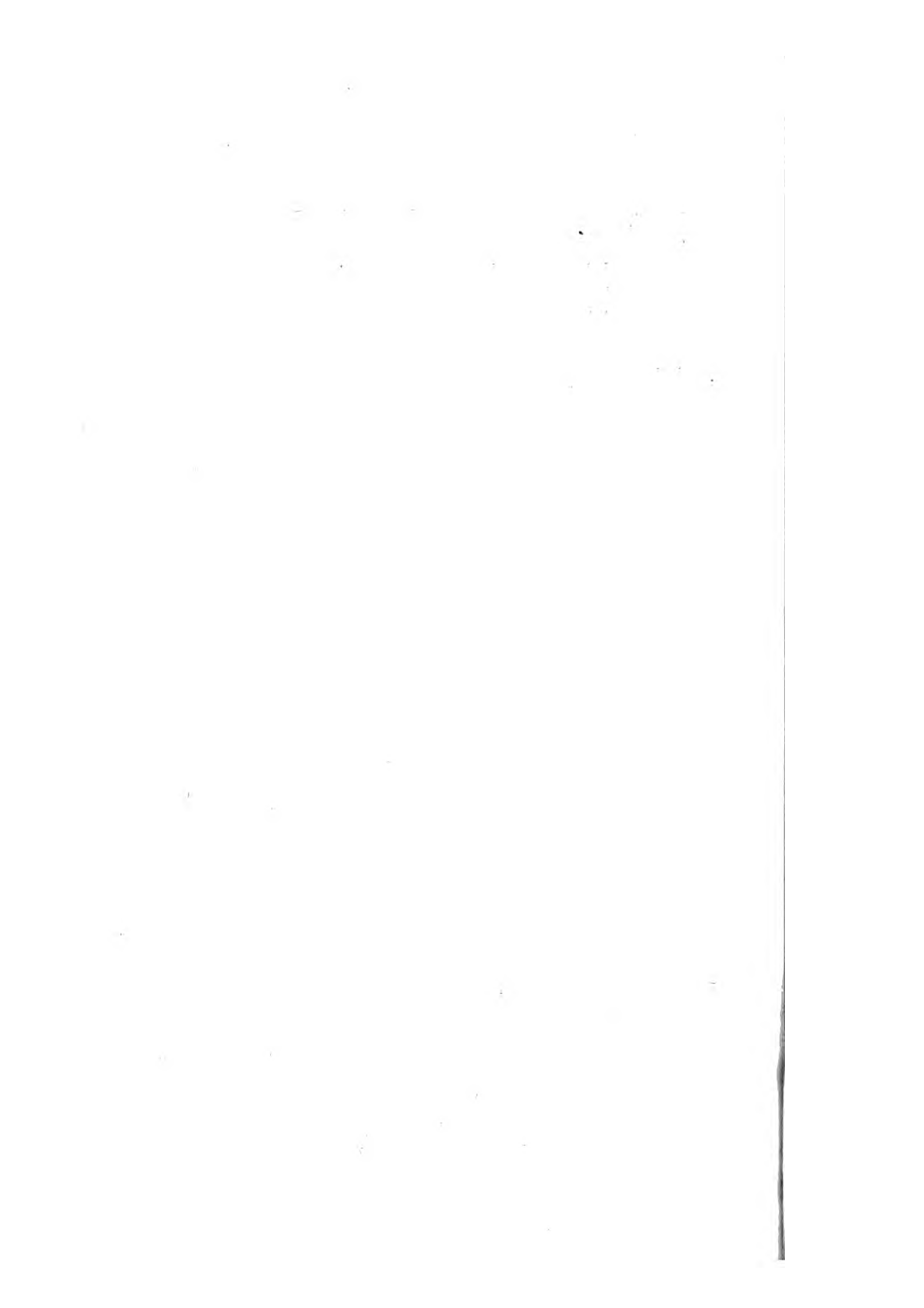
Although reason were intended by Providence to govern our passions ; yet it seems that in two points of the greatest moment to the being and

continuance of the world, God has intended our passions to prevail over reason. The first is, the propagation of our species; since no wise man ever married from the dictates of reason. The other is, the love of life; which, from the dictates of reason, every man would despise, and wish it at an end, or that it never had a beginning.

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON RELIGION.

THE scripture-system of man's creation is what Christians are bound to believe, and seems most agreeable of all others to probability and reason. Adam was formed from a piece of clay, and Eve from one of his ribs. The text mentioneth nothing of his Maker's intending him for, except to rule over the beasts of the field and birds of the air. As to Eve, it doth not appear that her husband was her monarch; only she was to be his help-mate, and placed in some degree of subjection. However, before his fall, the beasts were his most obedient subjects, whom he governed by absolute power. After his eating the forbidden fruit, the course of nature was changed; the animals began to reject his government; some were able to escape by flight, and others were too fierce to be attacked. The scripture mentioneth no particular acts of royalty in Adam over his posterity who were contemporary with him, or of any monarch until after the flood; whereof the first was Nimrod, the mighty hunter, who, as Milton expresseth it, made men, and not beasts, his prey: for men were easier caught by promises, and subdued by the folly or treachery of their own species; whereas the brutes prevailed only by their courage or strength, which, among

them, are peculiar to certain kinds. Lions, bears, elephants, and some other animals, are strong or valiant; and their species never degenerates in their native soil, except they happen to be enslaved or destroyed by human fraud: but men degenerate every day, merely by the folly, the perverseness, the avarice, the tyranny, the pride, the treachery, or inhumanity, of their own kind.



TRACTS

IN

DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

AN ARGUMENT
TO PROVE THAT THE ABOLISHING OF
CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND

MAY, AS THINGS NOW STAND,
BE ATTENDED WITH SOME INCONVENIENCIES, AND
PERHAPS NOT PRODUCE THOSE MANY GOOD
EFFECTS PROPOSED THEREBY.*

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1708.

I AM very sensible, what a weakness and presumption it is, to reason against the general humour and disposition of the world. I remember it was, with great justice, and due regard to the freedom both of the public and the press, forbidden, upon several penalties, to write, or discourse

* This admirable specimen of Swift's peculiar humour, is one of the most felicitous efforts in our language, to engage wit and humour on the side of religion. The author himself considered it as particularly levelled against the latitudinarian principles adopted by the Low Church party, with whom he was himself at that time united in temporal politics. But there is no occasion, nor, perhaps, much propriety, in narrowing the application of a satire, which too faithfully embraces the greater part of all parties, in all ages.

or lay wagers against the union, even before it was confirmed by parliament; because that was looked upon as a design to oppose the current of the people, which, beside the folly of it, is a manifest breach of the fundamental law, that makes this majority of opinion the voice of God. In like manner, and for the very same reasons, it may perhaps be neither safe nor prudent, to argue against the abolishing of Christianity, at a juncture, when all parties appear so unanimously determined upon the point, as we cannot but allow from their actions, their discourses, and their writings. However, I know not how, whether from the affectation of singularity, or the perverseness of human nature, but so it unhappily falls out, that I cannot be entirely of this opinion. Nay, though I were sure an order were issued for my immediate prosecution by the attorney-general, I should still confess, that in the present posture of our affairs, at home or abroad, I do not yet see the absolute necessity of extirpating the Christian religion from among us.

This perhaps may appear too great a paradox, even for our wise and paradoxical age to endure; therefore I shall handle it with all tenderness, and with the utmost deference to that great and profound majority, which is of another sentiment.

And yet the curious may please to observe, how much the genius of a nation is liable to alter in half an age: I have heard it affirmed for certain, by some very old people, that the contrary opinion was, even in their memories, as much in vogue, as the other is now; and that a project for the abolishing of Christianity, would then have appeared as singular, and been thought as absurd, as it would be, at this time, to write or discourse in its defence.

Therefore I freely own, that all appearances are against me. The system of the gospel, after the fate of other systems, is generally antiquated and exploded; and the mass or body of the common people, among whom it seems to have had its latest credit, are now grown as much ashamed of it as their betters; opinions, like fashions, always descending from those of quality to the middle sort, and thence to the vulgar, where at length they are dropped and vanish.

But here I would not be mistaken, and must therefore be so bold as to borrow a distinction from the writers on the other side, when they make a difference between nominal and real Trinitarians. I hope no reader imagines me so weak to stand up in the defence of real Christianity, such as used, in primitive times, (if we may believe the authors of those ages) to have an influence upon men's belief and actions: to offer at the restoring of that, would indeed be a wild project; it would be to dig up foundations; to destroy at one blow all the wit, and half the learning of the kingdom; to break the entire frame and constitution of things; to ruin trade, extinguish arts and sciences, with the professors of them; in short, to turn our courts, exchanges, and shops, into deserts; and would be full as absurd as the proposal of Horace, where he advises the Romans, all in a body, to leave their city, and seek a new seat in some remote part of the world, by way of cure for the corruption of their manners.

Therefore I think this caution was in itself altogether unnecessary, (which I have inserted only to prevent all possibility of cavilling) since every candid reader will easily understand my discourse to be intended only in defence of nominal Chris-

tianity; the other, having been for some time wholly laid aside by general consent, as utterly inconsistent with our present schemes of wealth and power.

But why we should therefore cast off the name and title of Christians, although the general opinion and resolution be so violent for it, I confess I cannot (with submission) apprehend, nor is the consequence necessary. However, since the undertakers propose such wonderful advantages to the nation by this project, and advance many plausible objections against the system of Christianity, I shall briefly consider the strength of both, fairly allow them their greatest weight, and offer such answers as I think most reasonable. After which I will beg leave to show, what inconveniencies may possibly happen by such an innovation, in the present posture of our affairs.

First, one great advantage proposed by the abolishing of Christianity, is, that it would very much enlarge and establish liberty of conscience, that great bulwark of our nation, and of the protestant religion; which is still too much limited by priestcraft, notwithstanding all the good intentions of the legislature, as we have lately found by a severe instance. For it is confidently reported, that two young gentlemen of real hopes, bright wit, and profound judgment, who, upon a thorough examination of causes and effects, and by the mere force of natural abilities, without the least tincture of learning, having made a discovery, that there was no God, and generously communicating their thoughts for the good of the public, were some time ago, by an unparalleled severity, and upon I know not what obsolete law, broke for blasphemy. And as it has been wisely

observed, if persecution once begins, no man alive knows how far it may reach, or where it will end.

In answer to all which, with deference to wiser judgments, I think this rather shows the necessity of a nominal religion among us. Great wits love to be free with the highest objects; and if they cannot be allowed a God to revile or renounce, they will speak evil of dignities, abuse the government, and reflect upon the ministry; which I am sure few will deny to be of much more pernicious consequence, according to the saying of Tiberius, *deorum offensa diis curæ*. As to the particular fact related, I think it is not fair to argue from one instance, perhaps another cannot be produced: yet (to the comfort of all those who may be apprehensive of persecution) blasphemy, we know, is freely spoken a million of times in every coffeehouse and tavern, or wherever else good company meet. It must be allowed, indeed, that to break an English free-born officer only for blasphemy, was, to speak the gentlest of such an action, a very high strain of absolute power. Little can be said in excuse for the general; perhaps he was afraid it might give offence to the allies, among whom, for aught we know, it may be the custom of the country to believe a God. But if he argued, as some have done, upon a mistaken principle, that an officer who is guilty of speaking blasphemy, may some time or other proceed so far as to raise a mutiny, the consequence is by no means to be admitted; for surely the commander of an English army is likely to be but ill obeyed, whose soldiers fear and reverence him, as little as they do a Deity.

It is farther objected against the gospel system, that it obliges men to the belief of things

too difficult for freethinkers, and such who have shaken off the prejudices that usually cling to a confined education. To which I answer, that men should be cautious how they raise objections, which reflect upon the wisdom of the nation. Is not every body freely allowed to believe whatever he pleases, and to publish his belief to the world whenever he thinks fit, especially if it serves to strengthen the party, which is in the right? Would any indifferent foreigner, who should read the trumpery lately written by Asgil, Tindal, Toland, Coward, and forty more, imagine the gospel to be our rule of faith, and confirmed by parliaments? Does any man either believe, or say he believes, or desire to have it thought that he says he believes, one syllable of the matter? And is any man worse received upon that score, or does he find his want of nominal faith a disadvantage to him, in the pursuit of any civil or military employment? What if there be an old dormant statute or two against him, are they not now obsolete to a degree, that Epsom and Dudley themselves, if they were now alive, would find it impossible to put them in execution.

It is likewise urged, that there are, by computation, in this kingdom, above ten thousand parsons, whose revenues, added to those of my lords the bishops, would suffice to maintain at least two hundred young gentlemen of wit and pleasure, and freethinking, enemies to priestcraft, narrow principles, pedantry, and prejudices; who might be an ornament to the court and town: and then again, so great a number of able [bodied] divines, might be a recruit to our fleet and armies. This indeed appears to be a consideration of some weight; but then, on the other side, several things

deserve to be considered likewise: as first, whether it may not be thought necessary, that in certain tracts of country, like what we call parishes, there shall be one man at least of abilities to read and write. Then it seems a wrong computation, that the revenues of the church throughout this island, would be large enough to maintain two hundred young gentlemen, or even half that number, after the present refined way of living; that is, to allow each of them such a rent, as, in the modern form of speech, would make them easy. But still there is in this project a greater mischief behind; and we ought to beware of the woman's folly, who killed the hen, that every morning laid her a golden egg. For, pray what would become of the race of men in the next age, if we had nothing to trust to beside the scrofulous consumptive productions, furnished by our men of wit and pleasure, when, having squandered away their vigour, health, and estates, they are forced, by some disagreeable marriage, to piece up their broken fortunes, and entail rottenness and politeness on their posterity? Now, here are ten thousand persons reduced, by the wise regulations of Henry the Eighth, to the necessity of a low diet, and moderate exercise, who are the only great restorers of our breed, without which the nation would, in an age or two, become one great hospital.

Another advantage proposed by the abolishing of Christianity, is, the clear gain of one day in seven, which is now entirely lost, and consequently the kingdom one seventh less considerable in trade, business, and pleasure; beside the loss to the public of so many stately structures, now in the hands of the clergy, which might be converted into play-houses, market-houses, ex-

changes, common dormitories, and other public edifices.

I hope I shall be forgiven a hard word, if I call this a perfect *cavil*. I readily own there has been an old custom, time out of mind, for people to assemble in the churches every Sunday, and that shops are still frequently shut, in order, as it is conceived, to preserve the memory of that ancient practice; but how this can prove a hindrance to business or pleasure, is hard to imagine. What if the men of pleasure are forced, one day in the week, to game at home instead of the chocolate-houses? are not the taverns and coffeehouses open? can there be a more convenient season for taking a dose of physic; are fewer claps got upon Sundays, than other days? is not that the chief day for traders to sum up the accounts of the week, and for lawyers to prepare their briefs? But I would fain know, how it can be pretended, that the churches are misapplied? where are more appointments and rendezvouses of gallantry? where more care to appear in the foremost box, with greater advantage of dress? where more meetings for business? where more bargains driven of all sorts? and where so many conveniences or inticements to sleep?

There is one advantage, greater than any of the foregoing, proposed by the abolishing of Christianity; that it will utterly extinguish parties among us, by removing those factious distinctions of high and low church, of whig and tory, presbyterian and church of England, which are now so many grievous clogs upon public proceedings, and are apt to dispose men to prefer the gratifying of themselves, or depressing of their adversaries, before the most important interest of the state.

I confess, if it were certain, that so great an advantage would redound to the nation by this expedient, I would submit, and be silent: but will any man say, that if the words *whoring, drinking, cheating, lying, stealing*, were, by act of parliament, ejected out of the English tongue and dictionaries, we should all awake next morning chaste and temperate, honest and just, and lovers of truth? Is this a fair consequence? or, if the physicians would forbid us to pronounce the word *pox, gout, rheumatism, and stone*, would that expedient serve, like so many talismans, to destroy the diseases themselves? are party and faction rooted in men's hearts no deeper than phrases borrowed from religion, or founded upon no firmer principles? and is our language so poor, that we cannot find other terms to express them? are *envy, pride, avarice, and ambition* such ill nomenclators, that they cannot furnish appellations for their owners? will not *heydukes* and *mamalukes, mandarins, and patshaws*, or any other words formed at pleasure, serve to distinguish those who are in the ministry, from others, who would be in it if they could? what, for instance, is easier than to vary the form of speech, and instead of the word church, make it a question in politics, whether the Monument be in danger? because religion was nearest at hand to furnish a few convenient phrases, is our invention so barren, we can find no other? suppose, for argument sake, that the tories favoured *Margaritha*,* the whigs Mrs Tofts, and the trimmers *Valentini*; would not *Margaritians, Toftians, and Valentinians* be very tolerable marks of distinc-

* Italian singers then in vogue.

tion? the *Prasini* and *Veniti*, two most virulent factions in Italy, began (if I remember right) by a distinction of colours in ribbands; and we might contend with as good a grace about the dignity of the blue and the green, which would serve as properly to divide the court, the parliament, and the kingdom, between them, as any terms of art whatsoever borrowed from religion. And therefore I think there is little force in this objection against Christianity, or prospect of so great an advantage, as is proposed in the abolishing of it.

It is again objected, as a very absurd ridiculous custom, that a set of men should be suffered, much less employed and hired, to bawl one day in seven against the lawfulness of those methods most in use, toward the pursuit of greatness, riches, and pleasure, which are the constant practice of all men alive on the other six. But this objection is, I think, a little unworthy of so refined an age as ours. Let us argue this matter calmly: I appeal to the breast of any polite freethinker, whether, in the pursuit of gratifying a predominant passion, he has not always felt a wonderful incitement, by reflecting it was a thing forbidden: and therefore we see, in order to cultivate this taste, the wisdom of the nation has taken special care, that the ladies should be furnished with prohibited silks, and the men with prohibited wine. And, indeed, it were to be wished, that some other prohibitions were promoted, in order to improve the pleasures of the town; which, for want of such expedients, begin already, as I am told, to flag and grow languid, giving way daily to cruel inroads from the spleen.

It is likewise proposed as a great advantage to the public, that if we once discard the system of the gospel, all religion will of course be banished

for ever; and, consequently, along with it, those grievous prejudices of education, which, under the names of *virtue, conscience, honour, justice,* and the like, are so apt to disturb the peace of human minds and the notions whereof are so hard to be eradicated, by right reason, or free-thinking, sometimes during the whole course of our lives.

Here first I observe, how difficult it is to get rid of a phrase, which the world is once grown fond of, though the occasion that first produced it, be entirely taken away. For several years past, if a man had but an ill-favoured nose, the deep thinkers of the age would, some way or other, contrive to impute the cause to the prejudice of his education. From this fountain were said to be derived all our foolish notions of justice, piety, love of our country; all our opinions of God, or a future state, Heaven, Hell, and the like: and there might formerly perhaps have been some pretence for this charge. But so effectual care has been since taken to remove those prejudices, by an entire change in the methods of education, that (with honour I mention it to our polite innovators) the young gentlemen, who are now on the scene, seem to have not the least tincture of those infusions, or string of those weeds: and, by consequence, the reason for abolishing nominal Christianity upon that pretext, is wholly ceased.

For the rest, it may perhaps admit a controversy, whether the banishing of all notions of religion whatsoever, would be convenient for the vulgar. Not that I am in the least of opinion with those, who hold religion to have been the invention of politicians, to keep the lower part

of the world in awe, by the fear of invisible powers; unless mankind were then very different to what it is now: for I look upon the mass or body of our people here in England, to be as free-thinkers, that is to say, as staunch unbelievers, as any of the highest rank. But I conceive some scattered notions about a superior power, to be of singular use for the common people, as furnishing excellent materials to keep children quiet when they grow peevish, and providing topics of amusement, in a tedious winter-night.

Lastly, it is proposed, as a singular advantage, that the abolishing of Christianity will very much contribute to the uniting of protestants, by enlarging the terms of communion, so as to take in all sorts of dissenters, who are now shut out of the pale, upon account of a few ceremonies, which all sides confess to be things indifferent: that this alone will effectually answer the great ends of a scheme for comprehension, by opening a large noble gate, at which all bodies may enter; whereas the chaffering with dissenters, and dodging about this or the other ceremony, is but like opening a few wickets, and leaving them at jar, by which no more than one can get in at a time, and that, not without stooping, and sideling, and squeezing his body.*

To all this I answer, that there is one darling inclination of mankind, which usually affects to be a retainer to religion, though she be neither its

* In this passage the author's high church principles, and jealousy of the dissenters, plainly shew themselves; and it is, perhaps, in special reference to what is here said, that he ranks it among the pamphlets which he wrote in opposition to the party then in power. See Vol. III. p. 243.

parent, its godmother, or its friend; I mean the spirit of opposition, that lived long before Christianity, and can easily subsist without it. Let us, for instance, examine wherein the opposition of sectaries among us consists; we shall find Christianity to have no share in it at all. Does the gospel any where prescribe a starched squeezed countenance, a stiff formal gait, a singularity of manners and habit, or any affected modes of speech, different from the reasonable part of mankind? Yet, if Christianity did not lend its name to stand in the gap, and to employ or divert these humours, they must of necessity be spent in contraventions to the laws of the land, and disturbance of the public peace. There is a portion of enthusiasm assigned to every nation, which, if it has not proper objects to work on, will burst out, and set all in a flame. If the quiet of a state can be bought, by only flinging men a few ceremonies to devour, it is a purchase no wise man would refuse. Let the mastiffs amuse themselves about a sheep's skin stuffed with hay, provided it will keep them from worrying the flock. The institution of convents abroad, seems, in one point, a strain of great wisdom; there being few irregularities in human passions, that may not have recourse to vent themselves in some of those orders, which are so many retreats for the speculative, the melancholy, the proud, the silent, the politic, and the morose, to spend themselves, and evaporate the noxious particles; for each of whom, we in this island, are forced to provide a several sect of religion, to keep them quiet: and whenever Christianity shall be abolished, the legislature must find some other expedient to employ and entertain them. For what imports it how large a gate you open, if there will be always left

a number, who place a pride and a merit in refusing to enter?

Having thus considered the most important objections against Christianity, and the chief advantages proposed by the abolishing thereof, I shall now, with equal deference and submission to wiser judgments, as before, proceed to mention a few inconveniencies that may happen, if the gospel should be repealed, which perhaps the projectors may not have sufficiently considered.

And first, I am very sensible how much the gentlemen of wit and pleasure are apt to murmur, and be choked at the sight of so many daggled-tail parsons, who happen to fall in their way, and offend their eyes; but at the same time, these wise reformers do not consider, what an advantage and felicity it is, for great wits to be always provided with objects of scorn and contempt, in order to exercise and improve their talents, and divert their spleen from falling on each other, or on themselves; especially when all this may be done, without the least imaginable danger to their persons.

And to urge another argument of a parallel nature: if Christianity were once abolished, how could the freethinkers, the strong reasoners, and the men of profound learning, be able to find another subject, so calculated in all points, whereon to display their abilities? what wonderful productions of wit should we be deprived of, from those, whose genius, by continual practice, has been wholly turned upon raillery and invectives against religion, and would therefore never be able to shine or distinguish themselves, upon any other subject! we are daily complaining of the great decline of wit among us, and would we take away the greatest, perhaps the only topic we have left?

who would ever have suspected Asgil for a wit, or Toland for a philosopher, if the inexhaustible stock of Christianity had not been at hand, to provide them with materials? what other subject through all art or nature, could have produced Tindal for a profound author, or furnished him with readers? it is the wise choice of the subject, that alone adorns and distinguishes the writer. For, had a hundred such pens as these been employed on the side of religion, they would have immediately sunk into silence and oblivion.

Nor do I think it wholly groundless, or my fears altogether imaginary, that the abolishing Christianity may perhaps bring the church into danger, or at least put the senate to the trouble of another securing vote. I desire I may not be mistaken; I am far from presuming to affirm, or think that the church is in danger at present, or as things now stand; but we know not how soon it may be so, when the Christian religion is repealed. As plausible as this project seems, there may be a dangerous design lurking under it. Nothing can be more notorious, than that the Atheists, Deists, Socinians, Anti-trinitarians, and other subdivisions of freethinkers, are persons of little zeal for the present ecclesiastical establishment: their declared opinion is for repealing the sacramental test; they are very indifferent with regard to ceremonies; nor do they hold the *jus divinum* of episcopacy; therefore this may be intended as one politic step toward altering the constitution of the church established, and setting up presbytery in the stead, which I leave to be farther considered by those at the helm.

In the last place, I think nothing can be more plain, than that by this expedient, we shall run into the evil we chiefly pretend to avoid: and

that the abolishment of the Christian religion, will be the readiest course we can take to introduce popery. And I am the more inclined to this opinion, because we know it has been the constant practice of the jesuits, to send over emissaries, with instructions to personate themselves members of the several prevailing sects among us. So it is recorded, that they have at sundry times appeared in the disguise of Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Independents, and Quakers, according as any of these were most in credit; so, since the fashion has been taken up of exploding religion, the popish missionaries have not been wanting to mix with the freethinkers; among whom Toland, the great oracle of the Antichristians, is an Irish priest, the son of an Irish priest; and the most learned and ingenious author of a book, called "The Rights of the Christian Church," was in a proper juncture reconciled to the Romish faith, whose true son, as appears by a hundred passages in his treatise, he still continues. Perhaps I could add some others to the number; but the fact is beyond dispute, and the reasoning they proceed by is right: for, supposing Christianity to be extinguished, the people will never be at ease till they find out some other method of worship; which will as infallibly produce superstition, as superstition will end in popery.

And therefore, if notwithstanding all I have said, it still be thought necessary to have a bill brought in for repealing Christianity, I would humbly offer an amendment, that instead of the word Christianity, may be put religion in general; which, I conceive, will much better answer all the good ends proposed by the projectors of it. For, as long as we leave in being a God and his providence, with all the necessary consequences

which curious and inquisitive men will be apt to draw from such premises, we do not strike at the root of the evil, though we should ever so effectually annihilate the present scheme of the gospel: for, of what use is freedom of thought, if it will not produce freedom of action? which is the sole end, how remote soever in appearance, of all objections against Christianity; and therefore, the freethinkers consider it as a sort of edifice, wherein all the parts have such a mutual dependence on each other, that if you happen to pull out one single nail, the whole fabric must fall to the ground. This was happily expressed by him, who had heard of a text brought for proof of the Trinity, which in an ancient manuscript was differently read; he thereupon immediately took the hint, and by a sudden deduction of a long *sorites*, most logically concluded; "Why, if it be as you say, I may safely whore and drink on, and defy the parson." From which, and many the like instances easy to be produced, I think nothing can be more manifest, than that the quarrel is not against any particular points of hard digestion in the Christian system, but against religion in general; which, by laying restraints on human nature, is supposed the great enemy to the freedom of thought and action.

Upon the whole, if it shall still be thought for the benefit of church and state, that Christianity be abolished, I conceive, however, it may be more convenient to defer the execution to a time of peace; and not venture, in this conjuncture, to disoblige our allies, who, as it falls out, are all Christians, and many of them, by the prejudices of their education, so bigoted, as to place a sort of pride in the appellation. If upon being rejected by them, we are to trust an alliance with

the Turk, we shall find ourselves much deceived : for, as he is too remote, and generally engaged in war with the Persian emperor, so his people would be more scandalized at our infidelity, than our Christian neighbours. For the Turks are not only strict observers of religious worship, but, what is worse, believe a God ; which is more than is required of us, even while we preserve the name of Christians.

To conclude : whatever some may think of the great advantages to trade by this favourite scheme, I do very much apprehend, that in six months time after the act is passed for the extirpation of the gospel, the Bank and East-India stock may fall at least one *per cent.* And since that is fifty times more, than ever the wisdom of our age thought fit to venture, for the preservation of Christianity, there is no reason we should be at so great a loss, merely for the sake of destroying it.

A PROJECT
FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF RELIGION
AND THE
REFORMATION OF MANNERS. *

*O si quis volet impias
Cædes, et rabiem tollere civicam :
Si quæret pater urbium
Subscribi statuis, inq̄omitam audeat
Refrænare licentiam.* HOR. Lib. III. Od. 24.

BY A PERSON OF QUALITY.

Written in the year 1709.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BERKELEY.

MADAM,

My intention of prefixing your ladyship's name, is not, after the common form, to desire your protection of the following papers ; which I take

* This treatise was written about 1709, when Swift was chaplain in the family of Lord Berkeley. The praises bestowed upon his countess, to whom it is inscribed, are said to have been as well merited as happily and elegantly expressed. Swift continued to entertain a profound respect for Lady Berkeley, long after he had quarrelled with the Earl. In after-life our author loved to have

to be a very unreasonable request; since by being inscribed to your ladyship, though without your knowledge, and from a concealed hand, you cannot recommend them without some suspicion of

this tract accounted a strong but covered attack upon the Whig administration, and accordingly his biographer, Mr Sheridan, contends at great length, that, by recommending to the queen a reformation of manners, Swift chiefly meant to insinuate a change of administration; and by advising, that she should call around her person, and to her councils, those who had the cause of religion at heart, he meant that she should chuse her officers and ministers from the Tories and High-Church men. It is no doubt true, that Swift, while he was disposed to be a Whig in politics, considered himself always as a High-Church man in religion; and many passages of this treatise may be considered as particularly affecting that party by whom the clergy were held in general and almost systematic contempt. But in this, as in the preceding treatise, the evils pointed out are too general to be imputed as the exclusive attributes of any one party, and I cannot be easily convinced, that so excellent a moral essay was written with a view merely political; or that Swift, who at this time had no connection with the Tories, was endeavouring without motive to undermine the administration of Halifax, Somers, and Godolphin, with whom he was living on terms of friendship, at least, if not of expectancy and dependence.

As to the merits of the Project, it must be allowed, that the author has been more successful in pointing out the extent of the evil than in suggesting remedies. The idea of a religious administration and court borders on the visionary; and the plan of censors and itinerant commissioners for the inspection of morals, could hardly be tolerated in a free country. Yet the minor branches of the Project might be successfully adopted. The reformation of the stage, (since happily perfected,) the exclusion of openly vicious characters from the presence of the sovereign, the more selected choice of justices of peace, the reviving discipline in schools, colleges, and inns of court, above all, the exertions of the clergy in a cause peculiarly their own, are sound practical remedies in an age of prevailing and general depravity.

Steele, then an intimate friend of the author, thus distinguished the treatise in the fifth number of the Tatler. "The title was so uncommon, and promised so peculiar a way of thinking, that every man here has read it, and as many as have done so have approved it: It is written with the spirit of one

partiality. My real design is, I confess, the very same I have often detested in most dedications ; that of publishing your praises to the world ; not upon the subject of your noble birth, for I know others as noble ; or of the greatness of your fortune, for I know others far greater ; or of that beautiful race (the images of their parents) which call you mother ; for even this may perhaps have been equalled in some other age or country. Besides, none of these advantages do derive any accomplishments to the owners, but serve at best only to adorn what they really possess. What I intend is, your piety, truth, good sense, and good nature, affability, and charity ; wherein I wish your ladyship had many equals, or any superiors ; and I wish I could say, I knew them too, for then your ladyship might have had a chance to escape this address. In the mean time, I think it highly necessary, for the interest of virtue and religion, that the whole kingdom should be informed in some parts of your character : for instance, that the easiest and politest conversation, joined with the truest piety, may be observed in your ladyship, in as great perfection, as they were ever seen apart, in any other persons. That by your prudence and management under several disad-

who has seen the world enough to undervalue it with good-breeding. The author must certainly be a man of wisdom as well as piety, and have spent much time in the exercise of both. The real causes of the decay of the interest of religion are set forth in a clear and lively manner, without unseasonable passions ; and the whole air of the book, as to the language, the sentiments, and the reasonings, shows it was written by one whose virtue sits easy about him, and to whom vice is thoroughly contemptible. It was said by one in company, alluding to that knowledge of the world this author seems to have, "The man writes much like a gentleman, and goes to Heaven with a very good mien."

vantages, you have preserved the lustre of that most noble family, into which you are grafted, and which the unmeasurable profusion of ancestors, for many generations, had too much eclipsed. Then, how happily you perform every office of life, to which Providence has called you: in the education of those two incomparable daughters, whose conduct is so universally admired; in every duty of a prudent, complying, affectionate wife; in that care which descends to the meanest of your domestics; and lastly, in that endless bounty to the poor, and discretion where to distribute it. I insist on my opinion, that it is of importance for the public to know this and a great deal more of your ladyship; yet whoever goes about to inform them shall, instead of finding credit, perhaps be censured for a flatterer. To avoid so usual a reproach, I declare this to be no dedication, but merely an introduction to a proposal for the advancement of religion and morals, by tracing, however imperfectly, some few lineaments in the character of a lady, who has spent all her life in the practice and promotion of both.

AMONG all the schemes offered to the public in this projecting age, I have observed, with some displeasure, that there have never been any for the improvement of religion and morals; which, beside the piety of the design, from the consequence of such a reformation in a future life, would be the best natural means for advancing the public felicity of the state, as well as the pre-

sent happiness of every individual. For, as much as faith and morality are declined among us, I am altogether confident, they might in a short time, and with no very great trouble, be raised to as high a perfection as numbers are capable of receiving. Indeed, the method is so easy and obvious, and some present opportunities so good, that, in order to have this project reduced to practice, there seems to want nothing more than to put those in mind, who by their honour, duty, and interest, are chiefly concerned.

But because it is idle to propose remedies, before we are assured of the disease, or to be in fear, till we are convinced of the danger, I shall first show in general, that the nation is extremely corrupted in religion and morals; and then I will offer a short scheme for the reformation of both.

As to the first, I know it is reckoned but a form of speech, when divines complain of the wickedness of the age: however, I believe, upon a fair comparison with other times and countries, it would be found an undoubted truth.

For first, to deliver nothing but plain matter of fact without exaggeration or satire, I suppose it will be granted, that hardly one in a hundred among our people of quality or gentry, appears to act by any principle of religion; that great numbers of them do entirely discard it, and are ready to own their disbelief of all revelation in ordinary discourse. Nor is the case much better among the vulgar, especially in great towns, where the profaneness and ignorance of handicraftsmen, small traders, servants, and the like, are to a degree very hard to be imagined greater. Then, it is observed abroad, that no race of mortals have so little sense of religion, as the English soldiers; to confirm which, I have been often told by great

officers of the army, that in the whole compass of their acquaintance, they could not recollect three of their profession, who seemed to regard, or believe, one syllable of the gospel: and the same at least may be affirmed of the fleet. The consequences of all which upon the actions of men are equally manifest. They never go about, as in former times, to hide or palliate their vices, but expose them freely to view, like any other common occurrences of life, without the least reproach from the world, or themselves. For instance, any man will tell you he intends to be drunk this evening, or was so last night, with as little ceremony or scruple, as he would tell you the time of the day. He will let you know he is going to a wench, or that he has got the venereal disease, with as much indifferency, as he would a piece of public news. He will swear, curse, or blaspheme, without the least passion or provocation. And though all regard for reputation is not quite laid aside in the other sex, it is however at so low an ebb, that very few among them seem to think virtue and conduct of absolute necessity for preserving it. If this be not so, how comes it to pass, that women of tainted reputations, find the same countenance and reception in all public places, with those of the nicest virtue, who pay and receive visits from them, without any manner of scruple? which proceeding, as it is not very old among us, so I take it to be of most pernicious consequence: it looks like a sort of compounding between virtue and vice, as if a woman were allowed to be vicious, provided she be not a profligate; as if there were a certain point, where gallantry ends, and infamy begins; or that a hundred criminal amours, were not as pardonable as half a score.

Beside those corruptions already mentioned, it would be endless to enumerate such as arise from the excess of play or gaming: the cheats, the quarrels, the oaths, and blasphemies, among the men; among the women, the neglect of household affairs, the unlimited freedoms, the undecent passion, and lastly, the known inlet to all lewdness, when after an ill run, the person must answer the defects of the purse, the rule on such occasions holding true in play, as it does in law; *quod non habet in crumena, luat in corpore.*

But all these are trifles in comparison, if we step into other scenes, and consider the fraud and cozenage of trading men and shopkeepers; that insatiable gulf of injustice and oppression, the law; the open traffic for all civil and military employments, (I wish it rested there) without the least regard to merit or qualifications; the corrupt management of men in office; the many detestable abuses in choosing those, who represent the people; with the management of interest and factions among the representatives: to which I must be bold to add, the ignorance of some of the lower clergy; the mean servile temper of others; the pert pragmatistical demeanour of several young stagers in divinity, upon their first producing themselves into the world; with many other circumstances, needless, or rather invidious to mention; which falling in with the corruptions already related, have, however unjustly, almost rendered the whole order contemptible.

This is a short view of the general depravities among us, without entering into particulars, which would be an endless labour. Now, as universal and deep-rooted as these appear to be, I am utterly deceived, if an effectual remedy might not be applied to most of them; neither am I at pre-

sent upon a wild speculative project, but such a one as may be easily put in execution.

For, while the prerogative of giving all employments continues in the crown, either immediately, or by subordination, it is in the power of the prince to make piety and virtue become the fashion of the age, if, at the same time, he would make them necessary qualifications for favour and preferment.

It is clear from present experience, that the bare example of the best prince will not have any mighty influence, where the age is very corrupt. For, when was there ever a better prince on the throne, than the present queen? I do not talk of her talent for government, her love of the people, or any other qualities that are purely regal; but her piety, charity, temperance, conjugal love, and whatever other virtues do best adorn a private life; wherein, without question or flattery, she has no superior: yet, neither will it be satire or peevish invective to affirm, that infidelity and vice are not much diminished since her coming to the crown, nor will, in all probability, till more effectual remedies be provided.

Thus human nature seems to lie under the disadvantage, that the example alone of a vicious prince, will in time corrupt an age; but the example of a good one, will not be sufficient to reform it without farther endeavours. Princes must therefore supply this defect by a vigorous exercise of that authority, which the law has left them; by making it every man's interest and honour, to cultivate religion and virtue; by rendering vice a disgrace, and the certain ruin to preferment or pretensions: all which they should first attempt in their own courts and families. For instance, might not the queen's domestics of

the middle and lower sort, be obliged, upon penalty of suspension or loss of their employments, to a constant weekly attendance at least on the service of the church; to a decent behaviour in it; to receive the sacrament four times in the year; to avoid swearing and irreligious prophane discourses; and to the appearance at least, of temperance and chastity? Might not the care of all this be committed to the strict inspection of proper officers? Might not those of higher rank, and nearer access to her majesty's person, receive her own commands to the same purpose, and be countenanced, or disfavoured, according as they obey? Might not the queen lay her injunctions on the bishops, and other great men of undoubted piety, to make diligent inquiry, and give her notice, if any person about her should happen to be of libertine principles or morals? Might not all those who enter upon any office in her majesty's family, be obliged to take an oath parallel with that against simony, which is administered to the clergy? It is not to be doubted, but that if these, or the like proceedings, were duly observed, morality and religion would soon become fashionable court virtues, and be taken up as the only methods to get or keep employments there; which alone would have mighty influence upon many of the nobility and principal gentry.

But, if the like methods were pursued as far as possible, with regard to those, who are in the great employments of state, it is hard to conceive how general a reformation they might in time produce among us. For, if piety and virtue were once reckoned qualifications necessary to preferment, every man thus endowed, when put into great stations, would readily imitate the queen's example, in the distribution of all offices in his

disposal; especially if any apparent transgression, through favour or partiality, would be imputed to him for a misdemeanor, by which he must certainly forfeit his favour and station: and there being such great numbers in employment, scattered through every town and county in this kingdom, if all these were exemplary in the conduct of their lives, things would soon take a new face, and religion receive a mighty encouragement: nor would the public weal be less advanced; since of nine offices in ten that are ill executed, the defect is not in capacity or understanding, but in common honesty. I know no employment, for which piety disqualifies any man; and if it did, I doubt the objection would not be very seasonably offered at present: because, it is perhaps too just a reflection, that in the disposal of places, the question whether a person be fit for what he is recommended to, is generally the last that is thought on or regarded.

I have often imagined, that something parallel to the office of censors anciently in Rome, would be of mighty use among us, and could be easily limited from running into any exorbitances. The Romans understood liberty at least as well as we, were as jealous of it, and upon every occasion as bold assertors. Yet I do not remember to have read any great complaint of the abuses in that office among them; but many admirable effects of it are left upon record. There are several pernicious vices frequent and notorious among us, that escape or elude the punishment of any law we have yet invented, or have had no law at all against them; such as atheism, drunkenness, fraud, avarice, and several others; which, by this institution, wisely regulated, might be much reformed. Suppose, for instance, that itinerary

commissioners were appointed to inspect every where throughout the kingdom, into the conduct, at least of men in office, with respect to their morals and religion, as well as their abilities; to receive the complaints and informations, that should be offered against them, and make their report here upon oath to the court or the ministry, who should reward or punish accordingly. I avoid entering into the particulars of this, or any other scheme, which, coming from a private hand, might be liable to many defects, but would soon be digested by the wisdom of the nation: and surely, six thousand pounds a year would not be ill laid out, among as many commissioners duly qualified, who, in three divisions, should be personally obliged to take their yearly circuits for that purpose.

But this is beside my present design, which was only to show what degree of reformation is in the power of the queen, without the interposition of the legislature; and which her majesty is, without question, obliged in conscience to endeavour by her authority, as much as she does by her practice.

It will be easily granted, that the example of this great town has a mighty influence over the whole kingdom; and it is as manifest, that the town is equally influenced by the court, and the ministry, and those who, by their employments, or their hopes, depend upon them. Now, if under so excellent a princess, as the present queen, we would suppose a family strictly regulated, as I have above proposed; a ministry, where every single person was of distinguished piety; if we should suppose all great offices of state and law filled after the same manner, and with such as were equally diligent in choosing persons, who,

in their several subordinations, would be obliged to follow the examples of their superiors, under the penalty of loss of favour and place; will not every body grant, that the empire of vice and irreligion would be soon destroyed in this great metropolis, and receive a terrible blow through the whole island, which has so great an intercourse with it, and so much affects to follow its fashions?

For, if religion were once understood to be the necessary step to favour and preferment, can it be imagined that any man would openly offend against it, who had the least regard for his reputation or his fortune? There is no quality so contrary to any nature, which men cannot affect, and put on upon occasion, in order to serve an interest, or gratify a prevailing passion. The proudest man will personate humility, the morosest learn to flatter, the laziest will be sedulous and active, where he is in pursuit of what he has much at heart: how ready, therefore, would most men be to step into the paths of virtue and piety, if they infallibly led to favour and fortune!

If swearing and profaneness, scandalous and avowed lewdness, excessive gaming and intemperance, were a little discountenanced in the army, I cannot readily see what ill consequences could be apprehended. If gentlemen of that profession, were at least obliged to some external decorum in their conduct, or even if a profligate life and character, were not a means of advancement, and the appearance of piety a most infallible hindrance, it is impossible the corruptions there should be so universal and exorbitant. I have been assured by several great officers, that no troops abroad are so ill disciplined as the English; which cannot well be otherwise, while the

common soldiers have perpetually before their eyes, the vicious example of their leaders; and it is hardly possible for those to commit any crime, whereof these are not infinitely more guilty, and with less temptation.

It is commonly charged upon the gentlemen of the army, that the beastly vice of drinking to excess, has been lately, from their example, restored among us; which for some years before was almost dropped in England. But, whoever the introducers were, they have succeeded to a miracle; many of the young nobility and gentry are already become great proficient, and are under no manner of concern to hide their talent, but are got beyond all sense of shame, or fear of reproach.

This might soon be remedied, if the queen would think fit to declare, that no young person of quality whatsoever, who was notoriously addicted to that, or any other vice, should be capable of her favour, or even admitted into her presence; with positive command to her ministers, and others in great office, to treat them in the same manner; after which, all men, who had any regard for their reputation, or any prospect of preferment, would avoid their commerce. This would quickly make that vice so scandalous, that those who could not subdue, would at least endeavour to disguise it.

By the like methods, a stop might be put to that ruinous practice of deep gaming; and the reason why it prevails so much, is, because a treatment, directly opposite in every point, is made use of to promote it; by which means the laws enacted against this abuse are wholly eluded.

It cannot be denied, that the want of strict discipline in the universities, has been of pernicious

ous consequence to the youth of this nation, who are there almost left entirely to their own management, especially those among them of better quality and fortune ; who, because they are not under a necessity of making learning their maintenance, are easily allowed to pass their time, and take their degrees, with little or no improvement ; than which there cannot well be a greater absurdity. For, if no advancement of knowledge can be had from those places, the time there spent is at best utterly lost, because every ornamental part of education, is better taught elsewhere : and, as for keeping youths out of harm's way, I doubt, where so many of them are got together, at full liberty of doing what they please, it will not answer the end. But, whatever abuses, corruptions, or deviations from statutes, have crept into the universities through neglect, or length of time, they might in a great degree be reformed, by strict injunctions from court (upon each particular) to the visitors and heads of houses ; beside the peculiar authority the queen may have in several colleges, whereof her predecessors were the founders. And among other regulations, it would be very convenient to prevent the excess of drinking ; with that scurvy custom among the lads, and parent of the former vice, the taking of tobacco, where it is not absolutely necessary in point of health.

From the universities, the young nobility, and others of great fortunes, are sent for early up to town, for fear of contracting any airs of pedantry, by a college education. Many of the younger gentry retire to the inns of court, where they are wholly left to their own discretion. And the consequence of this remissness in education appears, by observing that nine in ten of those, who rise

in the church or the court, the law, or the army, are younger brothers, or new men, whose narrow fortunes have forced them upon industry and application.

As for the inns of court, unless we suppose them to be much degenerated, they must needs be the worst instituted seminaries in any christian country; but whether they may be corrected without interposition of the legislature, I have not skill enough to determine. However, it is certain, that all wise nations have agreed in the necessity of a strict education, which consisted, among other things, in the observance of moral duties, especially justice, temperance, and chastity, as well as the knowledge of arts, and bodily exercises: but all these among us are laughed out of doors.

Without the least intention to offend the clergy, I cannot but think, that through a mistaken notion and practice, they prevent themselves from doing much service, which otherwise might lie in their power, to religion and virtue: I mean, by affecting so much to converse with each other, and caring so little to mingle with the laity. They have their particular clubs, and particular coffeehouses, where they generally appear in clusters: a single divine dares hardly show his person among numbers of fine gentlemen; or if he happens to fall into such company, he is silent and suspicious, in continual apprehension that some pert man of pleasure should break an unmannerly jest, and render him ridiculous. Now I take this behaviour of the clergy to be just as reasonable, as if the physicians should agree to spend their time in visiting one another, or their several apothecaries, and leave their patients to shift for themselves. In my humble opinion, the

clergy's business lies entirely among the laity; neither is there, perhaps, a more effectual way to forward the salvation of men's souls, than for spiritual persons to make themselves as agreeable as they can, in the conversations of the world; for which a learned education gives them great advantage, if they would please to improve and apply it. It so happens, that the men of pleasure, who never go to church, nor use themselves to read books of devotion, form their ideas of the clergy from a few poor strollers they often observe in the streets, or sneaking out of some person of quality's house, where they are hired by the lady at ten shillings a month; while those of better figure and parts, do seldom appear to correct these notions. And let some reasoners think what they please, it is certain that men must be brought to esteem and love the clergy, before they can be persuaded to be in love with religion. No man values the best medicine, if administered by a physician, whose person he hates or despises. If the clergy were as forward to appear in all companies, as other gentlemen, and would a little study the arts of conversation to make themselves agreeable, they might be welcome at every party where there was the least regard for politeness or good sense: and consequently prevent a thousand vicious or profane discourses, as well as actions; neither would men of understanding complain, that a clergyman was a constraint upon the company, because they could not speak blasphemy, or obscene jests before him. While the people are so jealous of the clergy's ambition, as to abhor all thoughts of the return of ecclesiastic discipline among them, I do not see any other method left for men of that function to take, in order to reform the world, than by using all ho-

nest arts to make themselves acceptable to the laity. This, no doubt, is part of that wisdom of the serpent, which the author of christianity directs, and is the very method used by St Paul, who became all things to all men, to the Jews a Jew, and a Greek to the Greeks.

How to remedy these inconveniences, may be a matter of some difficulty; since the clergy seem to be of an opinion, that this humour of sequestering themselves is a part of their duty; nay, as I remember, they have been told so by some of their bishops in their pastoral letters, particularly by one * among them of great merit and distinction, who yet, in his own practice, has all his lifetime taken a course directly contrary. But I am deceived, if an awkward shame, and fear of ill usage from the laity, have not a greater share in this mistaken conduct, than their own inclinations: however, if the outward profession of religion and virtue, were once in practice and countenance at court, as well as among all men in office, or who have any hopes or dependence for preferment, a good treatment of the clergy would be the necessary consequence of such a reformation; and they would soon be wise enough to see their own duty and interest in qualifying themselves for lay-conversation, when once they were out of fear of being choked by ribaldry or profaneness.

There is one farther circumstance upon this occasion, which I know not whether it will be very orthodox to mention: the clergy are the only set of men among us, who constantly wear a distinct habit from others: the consequence of which (not in reason but in fact) is this, that as long as any scandalous persons appear in that dress, it will continue in some degree a general mark of con-

* Dr Burnet, bishop of Salisbury,

tempt. Whoever happens to see a scoundrel in a gown, reeling home at midnight, a (sight neither frequent nor miraculous) is apt to entertain an ill idea of the whole order, and at the same time to be extremely comforted in his own vices. Some remedy might be put to this, if those straggling gentlemen, who come up to town to seek their fortunes, were fairly dismissed to the West Indies, where there is work enough, and where some better provision should be made for them, than I doubt there is at present. Or, what if no person were allowed to wear the habit, who had not some preferment in the church, or at least some temporal fortune, sufficient to keep him out of contempt? though, in my opinion, it were infinitely better, if all the clergy (except the bishops) were permitted to appear like other men of the graver sort, unless at those seasons when they are doing the business of their function.

There is one abuse in this town, which wonderfully contributes to the promotion of vice; that such men are often put into the commission of the peace, whose interest it is, that virtue should be utterly banished from among us; who maintain, or at least enrich themselves, by encouraging the grossest immoralities; to whom all the bawds of the ward pay contribution, for shelter and protection from the laws. Thus these worthy magistrates, instead of lessening enormities, are the occasion of just twice as much debauchery as there would be without them. For those infamous women are forced upon doubling their work and industry, to answer double charges, of paying the justice, and supporting themselves. Like thieves who escape the gallows, and are let out to steal, in order to discharge the gaoler's fees.

It is not to be questioned, but the queen and ministry might easily redress this abominable grie-

vance, by enlarging the number of justices of the peace; by endeavouring to choose men of virtuous principles; by admitting none who have not considerable fortunes; perhaps, by receiving into the number some of the most eminent clergy: then, by forcing all of them, upon severe penalties, to act when there is occasion, and not permitting any who are offered, to refuse the commission; but in these two last cases, which are very material, I doubt there will be need of the legislature.

The reformation of the stage is entirely in the power of the queen; and in the consequences it has upon the minds of the younger people, does very well deserve the strictest care. Beside the undecent and prophane passages; beside the perpetual turning into ridicule the very function of the priesthood, with other irregularities, in most modern comedies, which have been often objected to them; it is worth observing the distributive justice of the authors, which is constantly applied to the punishment of virtue, and the reward of vice; directly opposite to the rules of their best critics, as well as to the practice of dramatic poets, in all other ages and countries. For example, a country squire, who is represented with no other vice but that of being a clown, and having the provincial accent upon his tongue, which is neither a fault, nor in his power to remedy, must be condemned to marry a cast wench or a cracked chambermaid. On the other side, a rakehell of the town, whose character is set off with no other accomplishment, but excessive prodigality, profaneness, intemperance, and lust, is rewarded with a lady of great fortune to repair his own, which his vices had almost ruined. And as in a tragedy, the hero is represented to have obtained many

victories in order to raise his character in the minds of the spectators; so the hero of a comedy is represented to have been victorious in all his intrigues for the same reason. I do not remember, that our English poets ever suffered a criminal amour to succeed upon the stage, till the reign of king Charles the Second. Ever since that time, the alderman is made a cuckold, the deluded virgin is debauched, and adultery and fornication are supposed to be committed behind the scenes, as part of the action. These and many more corruptions of the theatre, peculiar to our age and nation, need continue no longer, than while the court is content to connive at or neglect them. Surely a pension would not be ill employed on some men of wit, learning, and virtue, who might have power to strike out every offensive or unbecoming passage, from plays already written, as well as those that may be offered to the stage for the future. By which, and other wise regulations, the theatre might become a very innocent and useful diversion, instead of being a scandal and reproach to our religion and country.

The proposals I have hitherto made for the advancement of religion and morality, are such as come within reach of the administration; such as a pious active prince, with a steady resolution, might soon bring to effect. Neither am I aware of any objections to be raised against what I have advanced; unless it should be thought, that making religion a necessary step to interest and favour might increase hypocrisy among us; and I readily believe it would. But if one in twenty should be brought over to true piety by this, or the like methods, and the other nineteen be only hypocrites, the advantage would still be great. Besides, hypocrisy is much more eligible than

open infidelity and vice; it wears the livery of religion; it acknowledges her authority, and is cautious of giving scandal. Nay, a long continued disguise is too great a constraint upon human nature, especially an English disposition: men would leave off their vices out of mere weariness, rather than undergo the toil and hazard, and perhaps the expense, of practising them perpetually in private. And I believe it is often with religion, as it is with love; which, by much dissembling, at last grows real.

All other projects to this great end have proved hitherto ineffectual. Laws against immorality have not been executed, and proclamations occasionally issued out to enforce them are wholly unregarded, as things of form. Religious societies, though begun with excellent intention, and by persons of true piety, are said, I know not whether truly or not, to have dwindled into factious clubs, and grown a trade to enrich little knavish informers of the meanest rank, such as common constables, and broken shopkeepers.

And that some effectual attempt should be made toward such a reformation, is perhaps more necessary than people commonly apprehend; because the ruin of a state is generally preceded by a universal degeneracy of manners, and contempt of religion; which is entirely our case at present.

Diis te minorem, quod geris, imperas. HOR.

Neither is this a matter to be deferred till a more convenient time of peace and leisure; because a reformation in men's faith and morals, is the best natural, as well as religious means, to bring the war to a good conclusion. For, if men

in trust performed their duty for conscience sake, affairs would not suffer through fraud, falsehood, and neglect, as they now perpetually do. And if they believed a God, and his providence, and acted accordingly, they might reasonably hope for his divine assistance, in so just a cause as ours.

Nor could the majesty of the English crown appear, upon any occasion, in a greater lustre either to foreigners or subjects, than by an administration, which, producing such great effects, would discover so much power. And power being the natural appetite of princes, a limited monarch cannot so well gratify it in any thing, as a strict execution of the laws.

Besides, all parties would be obliged to close with so good a work as this, for their own reputation: neither is any expedient more likely to unite them. For the most violent party men, I have ever observed, are such, as in the conduct of their lives have discovered least sense of religion or morality; and when all such are laid aside, at least those among them as shall be found incorrigible, it will be a matter perhaps of no great difficulty to reconcile the rest.

The many corruptions at present in every branch of business are almost inconceivable. I have heard it computed by skilful persons, that of six millions raised every year for the service of the public, one third, at least, is sunk and intercepted through the several classes and subordinations of artful men in office, before the remainder is applied to the proper uses. This is an accidental ill effect of our freedom. And while such men are in trust, who have no check from within, nor any views but toward their interest, there is no other fence against them, but the certainty of being hanged upon the first discovery, by the arbi-

trary will of an unlimited monarch, or his vizier. Among us, the only danger to be apprehended is, the loss of an employment; and that danger is to be eluded a thousand ways. Besides, when fraud is great, it furnishes weapons to defend itself: and at worst, if the crimes be so flagrant, that a man is laid aside out of perfect shame, (which rarely happens) he retires loaded with the spoils of the nation; *et fruitur diis iratis*. I could name a commission, where several persons, out of a salary of five hundred pounds, without other visible revenues, have always lived at the rate of two thousand, and laid out forty or fifty thousand upon purchases of lands or annuities. A hundred other instances of the same kind might easily be produced. What remedy therefore can be found against such grievances, in a constitution like ours, but to bring religion into countenance, and encourage those, who, from the hope of future reward, and dread of future punishment, will be moved to act with justice and integrity?

This is not to be accomplished any other way, than by introducing religion, as much as possible, to be the turn and fashion of the age; which only lies in the power of the administration; the prince with utmost strictness regulating the court, the ministry, and other persons in great employment; and these, by their example and authority, reforming all who have dependence on them.

It is certain, that a reformation successfully carried on in this great town, would in time spread itself over the whole kingdom: since most of the considerable youth pass here that season of their lives, wherein the strongest impressions are made, in order to improve their education, or advance their fortune; and those among them, who re-

turn into their several counties, are sure to be followed and imitated, as the greatest patterns of wit and good breeding.

And if things were once in this train, that is, if virtue and religion were established as the necessary titles to reputation and preferment; and if vice and infidelity were not only loaden with infamy, but made the infallible ruin of all men's pretensions; our duty, by becoming our interest, would take root in our natures, and mix with the very genius of our people; so that it would not be easy for the example of one wicked prince to bring us back to our former corruptions.

I have confined myself (as it is before observed) to those methods for the advancement of piety, which are in the power of a prince, limited like ours, by a strict execution of the laws already in force. And this is enough for a project, that comes without any name or recommendation; I doubt, a great deal more, than will suddenly be reduced into practice. Though if any disposition should appear toward so good a work, it is certain, that the assistance of the legislative power would be necessary to make it more complete. I will instance only a few particulars.

In order to reform the vices of this town, which, as we have said, has so mighty an influence on the whole kingdom, it would be very instrumental to have a law made, that all taverns and alehouses should be obliged to dismiss their company at twelve at night, and shut up their doors; and that no woman should be suffered to enter any tavern or alehouse, upon any pretence whatsoever. It is easy to conceive what a number of ill consequences such a law would prevent; the mischiefs of quarrels, and lewdness, and thefts, and midnight brawls, the diseases of intemperance and

venery, and a thousand other evils needless to mention. Nor would it be amiss, if the masters of those public houses were obliged, upon the severest penalties, to give only a proportioned quantity of drink to every company; and when he found his guests disordered with excess, to refuse them any more.

I believe there is hardly a nation in Christendom, where all kind of fraud is practised in so unmeasurable a degree as with us. The lawyer, the tradesman, the mechanic, have found so many arts to deceive in their several callings, that they far outgrow the common prudence of mankind, which is in no sort able to fence against them. Neither could the legislature in any thing more consult the public good, than by providing some effectual remedy against this evil, which, in several cases, deserves greater punishment, than many crimes that are capital among us. The vintner, who by mixing poison with his wines, destroys more lives than any one disease in the bill of mortality; the lawyer, who persuades you to a purchase, which he knows is mortgaged for more than the worth, to the ruin of you and your family; the goldsmith or scrivener, who takes all your fortune to dispose of, when he has beforehand resolved to break the following day, do surely deserve the gallows, much better than the wretch who is carried thither for stealing a horse.

It cannot easily be answered to God or man, why a law is not made for limiting the press; at least so far as to prevent the publishing of such pernicious books, as, under pretence of freethinking, endeavour to overthrow those tenets in religion, which have been held inviolable, almost in all ages, by every sect that pretend to be Christian; and cannot, therefore, with any colour of

reason, be called points in controversy, or matters of speculation, as some would pretend. The doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the immortality of the soul, and even the truth of all revelation, are daily exploded and denied in books openly printed; though it is to be supposed, neither party will avow such principles, or own the supporting of them to be any way necessary to their service.

It would be endless to set down every corruption or defect, which requires a remedy from the legislative power. Senates are likely to have little regard for any proposals, that come from without doors; though, under a due sense of my own inabilities, I am fully convinced that the unbiassed thoughts of an honest and wise man, employed on the good of his country, may be better digested, than the results of a multitude, where faction and interest too often prevail; as a single guide may direct the way better than five hundred, who have contrary views, or look asquint, or shut their eyes.

I shall therefore mention but one more particular, which I think the parliament ought to take under consideration; whether it be not a shame to our country, and a scandal to Christianity, that in many towns, where there is a prodigious increase in the number of houses and inhabitants, so little care should be taken for the building of churches, that five parts in six of the people are absolutely hindered from hearing divine service? particularly here in London,* where a single mi-

* This paragraph is known to have given the first hint to certain bishops, particularly to bishop Atterbury, in the earl of Oxford's ministry, to procure a fund for building fifty new churches in London.

nister, with one or two sorry curates, has the care sometimes of above twenty thousand souls incumbent on him; a neglect of religion so ignominious, in my opinion, that it can hardly be equalled in any civilized age or country.

But, to leave these airy imaginations of introducing new laws for the amendment of mankind; what I principally insist on, is a due execution of the old, which lies wholly in the crown, and in the authority thence derived: I return therefore to my former assertion, that if stations of power, trust, profit, and honour, were constantly made the rewards of virtue and piety, such an administration must needs have a mighty influence on the faith and morals of the whole kingdom: and men of great abilities would then endeavour to excel in the duties of a religious life, in order to qualify themselves for public service. I may possibly be wrong in some of the means I prescribe toward this end; but that is no material objection against the design itself. Let those who are at the helm contrive it better, which, perhaps, they may easily do. Every body will agree that the disease is manifest, as well as dangerous; that some remedy is necessary, and that none yet applied has been effectual; which is a sufficient excuse for any man, who wishes well to his country, to offer his thoughts, when he can have no other end in view but the public good. The present queen is a princess of as many and great virtues as ever filled a throne: how would it brighten her character to the present and after ages, if she would exert her utmost authority, to instil some share of those virtues into her people, which they are too degenerate to learn only from her example! and, be it spoke with all the veneration possible for so excellent a sovereign, her

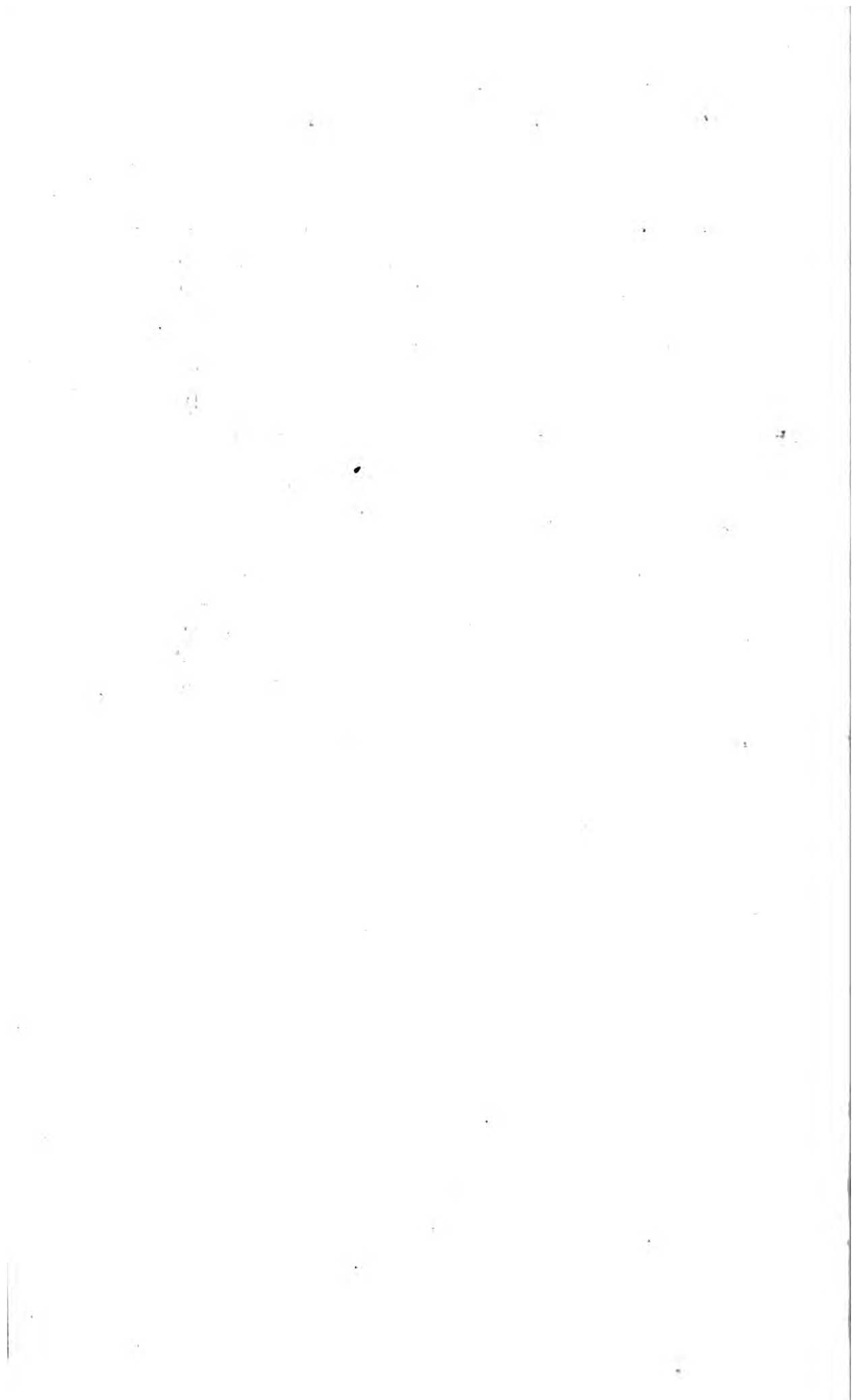
best endeavours in this weighty affair are a most important part of her duty, as well as of her interest, and her honour.

But it must be confessed, that as things are now, every man thinks he has laid in a sufficient stock of merit, and may pretend to any employment, provided he has been loud and frequent in declaring himself hearty for the government. It is true, he is a man of pleasure, and a freethinker; that is, in other words, he is profligate in his morals, and a despiser of religion; but in point of party, he is one to be confided in; he is an assertor of liberty and property; he rattles it out against popery and arbitrary power, and priestcraft and high church. It is enough: he is a person fully qualified for any employment, in the court or the navy, the law or the revenue; where he will be sure to leave no arts untried, of bribery, fraud, injustice, oppression, that he can practise with any hope of impunity. No wonder such men are true to a government, where liberty runs high, where property, however attained, is so well secured, and where the administration is at least so gentle: it is impossible they could choose any other constitution, without changing to their loss.

Fidelity to a present establishment is indeed the principal means to defend it from a foreign enemy, but without other qualifications will not prevent corruptions from within; and states are more often ruined by these, than the other.

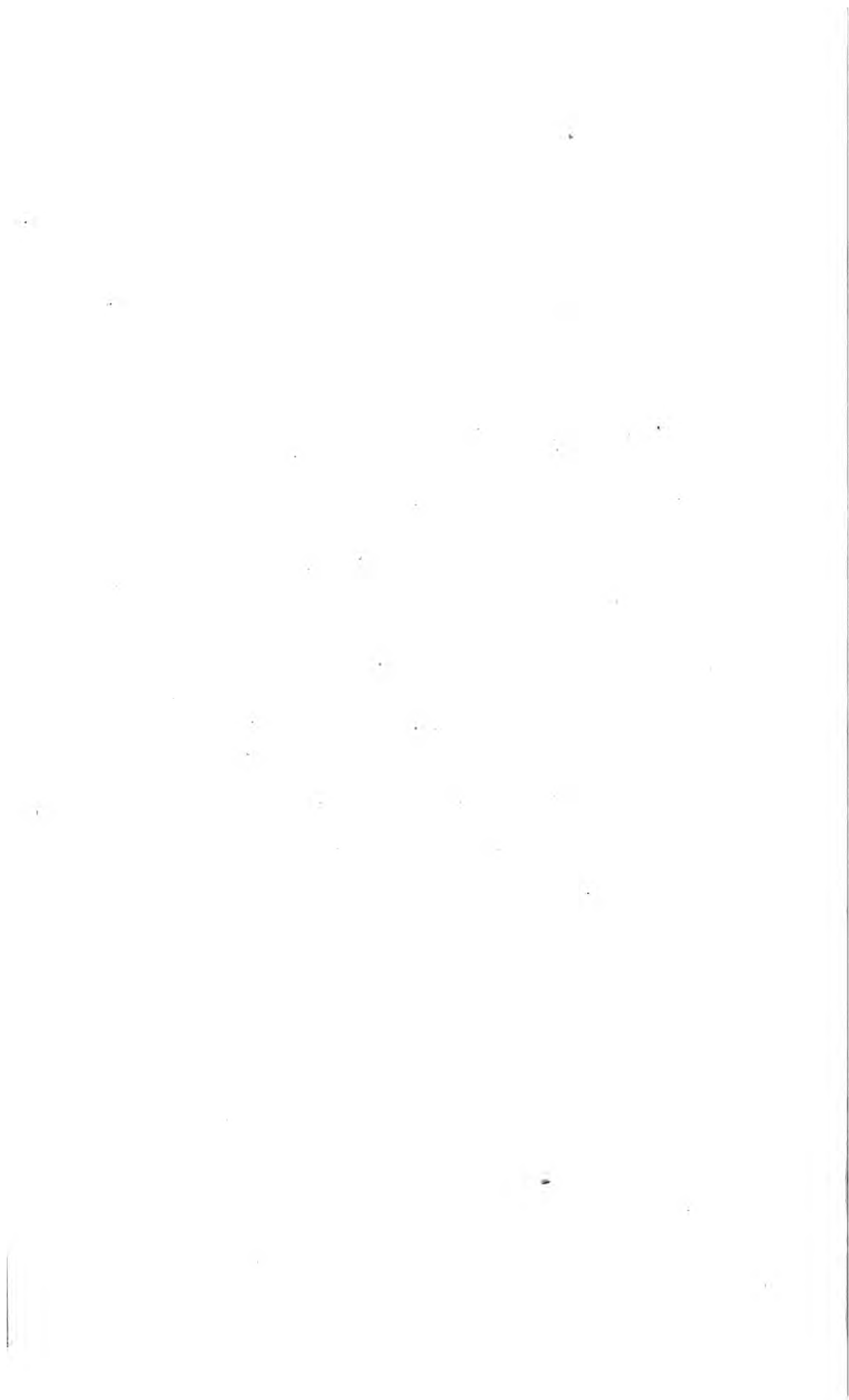
To conclude: whether the proposals I have offered toward a reformation, be such as are most prudent and convenient, may probably be a question; but it is none at all, whether some reformation be absolutely necessary; because the nature of things is such, that if abuses be not reme-

died, they will certainly increase, nor ever stop, till they end in the subversion of a commonwealth. As there must always of necessity be some corruptions, so, in a well-instituted state, the executive power will be always contending against them by reducing things (as Machiavel speaks) to their first principles; never letting abuses grow inveterate, or multiply so far, that it will be hard to find remedies, and perhaps impossible to apply them. As he, that would keep his house in repair, must attend every little breach or flaw, and supply it immediately, else time alone will bring all to ruin; how much more the common accidents of storms and rain? he must live in perpetual danger of his house falling about his ears: and will find it cheaper to throw it quite down, and build it again from the ground, perhaps upon a new foundation, or at least in a new form, which may neither be so safe, nor so convenient as the old.



R E M A R K S
UPON
A BOOK,
ENTITLED,
“ The RIGHTS of the CHRISTIAN CHURCH,”
&c.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1708, BUT LEFT UNFINISHED



REMARKS, &c.

IN the year 1706, Dr Matthew Tindal, a civilian of some reputation, published a book entitled, "The Rights of the Christian Church asserted, against the Romish and all other Priests, who claim an independent Power over it: with a Preface concerning the Government of the Church of England, as by Law established." This singular treatise, under covert of an attack upon the Romish Church, was principally intended to sap the foundations of the national Church of England. The alarm was speedily taken, and many champions appeared in defence of the establishment. Among these, the most remarkable was the learned Dr Hickes, of Oxford, who published two treatises, "Of the Christian Priesthood," and "Of the Dignity of the Episcopal Order," and several other pieces, in answer to Tindal's "Rights of the Christian Church." Dr William Wotton, chaplain to the earl of Nottingham, attacked the same work, in a sermon preached at a visitation of the bishop of Lincoln, and in another tract. Samuel Hill, Conyers-Place, and finally Mr Oldisworth, entered also into the controversy, which was maintained with equal zeal on both sides, until it was swallowed up in the more furious and universal disputes occasioned by Sacheverel's sermon. Swift, it would seem, had prepared materials for entering vigorously into the contest with Tindal, nor can there be a doubt of the powerful effect which his interference would have produced, if we judge what the work must have been when completed, by the following unembodied hints.

We cannot better ascertain the tendency of Tindal's work, than by quoting those passages upon which the grand jury of Middlesex presented the author, printer, and publisher of "the Rights of the Christian Church," as dangerous and disaffected persons, and promoters of sedition and profaneness. This charge they grounded upon the following extracts:

"The church is a private society, and no more power belonging to it than to other private companies and clubs, and, consequently, all the right any one has to be an ecclesiastical officer, and the power he is intrusted with, depends on the consent of the parties concerned, and is no greater than they can bestow."
—(*The Book*, p. 104.) "The scriptures no where make the re-

ceiving the Lord's Supper from the hands of a priest necessary."—(Page 105.) "The remembrance of Christ's sufferings a mere grace-cup delivered to be handed about."—(Page 108.) "Among Christians, one no more than another can be reckoned a priest from scripture."—And the clerk hath as good a title to the priesthood as the parson.—Every one, as well as the minister, rightly consecrateth the elements to himself.—Any thing further than this, may rather be called Conjunction than Consecration."—(Page 313.) "The absurdities of bishops being, by divine appointment, governors of the Christian church, and others are capable of being of that number, who derive not their right by an uninterrupted succession of bishops in the Catholic church."—(Page 255.) "The supreme powers had no way to escape the heavier oppressions, and more insupportable usurpations of their own clergy, than by submitting to the pope's milder yoke and gentler authority."—(Page 151.) "One grand cause of mistake is, not considering when God acts as governor of the universe, and when as prince of a particular nation. The Jews, when they came out of the land of bondage, were under no settled government, until God was pleased to offer himself to be their king, to which all the people expressly consented.—God's laws bound no nation, except those that agreed to the Horeb contract."—(Page 47.) "Not only an independent power of excommunication, but of ordination in the clergy, is inconsistent with the magistrate's right to protect the commonwealth."—(Page 118.) "Priests, no more then spiritual make-baits, baraters, boutefeux, and incendiaries, and who make churches serve to worse purposes than bear-gardens."—(Page 15.) "It is a grand mistake to suppose the magistrate's power extends to indifferent things.—Men have liberty as they please, and a right—to form what clubs, companies, or meetings, they think fit, either for business or pleasure, which the magistrates—cannot hinder, without manifest injustice."—(Page 312.) "God—interposed not amongst the Jews, until they had chosen him for their king."

In 1710, Tindal's book, with some other of his pamphlets, were ordered, by a vote of the house of commons, to be burned along with Sacheverel's sermon—an example of impartiality in assigning punishment to latitudinarians, as well as to high-flyers, for which the people gave the ministry very little credit.

REMARKS, &c.

BEFORE I enter upon a particular examination of this treatise, it will be convenient to do two things :

First, To give some account of the author, together with the motives that might probably engage him in such a work. And,

Secondly, To discover the nature and tendency in general of the work itself.

The first of these, although it has been objected against, seems highly reasonable, especially in books that instil pernicious principles. For, although a book is not intrinsically much better or worse, according to the stature or complexion of the author, yet when it happens to make a noise, we are apt, and curious, as in other noises, to look about from whence it comes. But, however, there is something more in the matter.

If a theological subject be well handled by a layman, it is better received than if it came from a divine: and that for reasons obvious enough, which, although of little weight in themselves, well ever have a great deal with mankind.

But when books are written with ill intentions, to advance dangerous opinions, or destroy foundations, it may be then of real use to know from

what quarter they come, and go a good way toward their confutation. For instance, if any man should write a book against the lawfulness of punishing felony with death; and upon inquiry, the author should be found in Newgate, under condemnation, for robbing a house; his arguments would, not very unjustly, lose much of their force, from the circumstances he lay under. So, when Milton writ his book of divorces, it was presently rejected as an occasional treatise; because every body knew he had a shrew for his wife. Neither can there be any reason imagined, why he might not, after he was blind, have writ another upon the danger and inconvenience of eyes. But it is a piece of logic which will hardly pass on the world, that because one man has a sore nose, therefore all the town should put plasters upon theirs. So, if this treatise about the rights of the church, should prove to be the work of a man steady in his principles, of exact morals, and profound learning, a true lover of his country, and a hater of Christianity, as what he really believes to be a cheat upon mankind, whom he would undeceive purely for their good; it might be apt to check unwary men, even of good dispositions toward religion. But, if it be found the production of a man soured with age and misfortunes, together with the consciousness of past miscarriages; of one, who, in hopes of preferment, was reconciled to the popish religion; of one, wholly prostitute in life and principles, and only an enemy to religion, because it condemns them:* in this case, and this last I find is the

* Dr Matthew Tindal became a convert to the Romish religion, during the reign of James II. What share interest had in his con-

universal opinion, he is likely to have few proselytes, beside those, who, from a sense of their vicious lives, require to be perpetually supplied by such amusements as this; which serve to flatter their wishes, and debase their understandings.

I know there are some who would fain have it, that this discourse was written by a club of free-thinkers, among whom the supposed author only came in for a share. But, sure, we cannot judge so meanly of any party, without affronting the dignity of mankind. If this be so, and if here be the product of all their quotas and contributions, we must needs allow, that freethinking is a most confined and limited talent. It is true, indeed, the whole discourse seems to be a motley, inconsistent composition, made up of various shreds of equal fineness, although of different colours. It is a bundle of incoherent maxims and assertions, that frequently destroy one another. But still there is the same flatness of thought and style; the same weak advances toward wit and raillery; the same petulancy and pertness of spirit; the same train of superficial reading; the same threadbare quotation; the same affectation of forming

version may be easily imagined; but it is uncertain whether it was the disappointment of his expectations, or conviction, that in 1687, induced him to reconcile himself to the Church of England, and become a decided favourer of those doctrines which produced the Revolution. He often sat as a judge in the Court of Delegates, but did not practise much as an advocate in Doctor's Commons. His chief means of support was a pension from government of 200l. Tindal died in 1733, three years after publication of his grand deistical work, "Christianity as old as the Creation." His effects, amounting to 2000l. and upwards, were appropriated, by the noted Eustace Budgell, to the prejudice of the heir at law, under a will attended with circumstances of great suspicion.

general rules upon false and scanty premises. And lastly, the same vapid venom sprinkled over the whole; which, like the dying impotent bite of a trodden benumbed snake, may be nauseous and offensive, but cannot be very dangerous.

And, indeed, I am so far from thinking this libel to be born of several fathers, that it has been the wonder of several others, as well as myself, how it was possible for any man, who appears to have gone the common circle of academical education;* who has taken so universal a liberty, and has so entirely laid aside all regards, not only of Christianity, but common truth and justice; one who is dead to all sense of shame, and seems to be past the getting or losing of a reputation, should, with so many advantages, and upon so unlimited a subject, come out with so poor, so jejune a production. Should we pity, or be amazed at so perverse a talent, which, instead of qualifying an author to give a new turn to old matter, disposes him quite contrary to talk in an old beaten trivial manner upon topics wholly new? to make so many sallies into pedantry without a call, upon a subject the most alien, and in the very moments he is declaiming against it, and in an age too, where it is so violently exploded, especially among those readers he proposes to entertain?

I know it will be said, that this is only to talk in the common style of an answerer; but I have not so little policy. If there were any hope of reputation or merit from such victory, I should be apt, like others, to cry up the courage and

* Tindal was educated at Oxford, and had a fellowship at All-Souls, the only preferment he ever enjoyed.

conduct of an enemy. Whereas to detect the weakness, the malice, the sophistry, the falsehood, the ignorance of such a writer, requires little more than to rank his perfections in such an order, and place them in such a light, that the commonest reader may form a judgment of them.

It may still be a wonder how so heavy a book, written upon a subject in appearance so little instructive or diverting, should survive to three editions, and consequently find a better reception than is usual with such bulky, spiritless volumes; and this, in an age, that pretends so soon to be nauseated with what is tedious and dull. To which I can only return, that, as burning a book by the common hangman, is a known expedient to make it sell; so, to write a book that deserves such treatment, is another: and a third, perhaps as effectual as either, is to ply an insipid, worthless tract, with grave and learned answers, as Dr Hickes, Dr Potter, and Mr Wotton have done. Such performances, however commendable, have glanced a reputation upon the piece; which owes its life to the strength of those hands and weapons that were raised to destroy it; like flinging a mountain upon a worm, which, instead of being bruised, by the advantage of its littleness, lodges under it unhurt.

But neither is this all. For the subject, as unpromising as it seems at first view, is no less than that of Lucretius, to free men's minds from the bondage of religion; and this, not by little hints and by piecemeal, after the manner of those little atheistical tracts that steal into the world, but in a thorough wholesale manner; by making religion, church, Christianity, with all their concomitants, a perfect contrivance of the civil power.

It is an imputation often charged on this sort of men, that, by their invectives against religion, they can possibly propose no other end than that of fortifying themselves and others against the reproaches of a vicious life; it being necessary for men of libertine practices, to embrace libertine principles, or else they cannot act in consistence with any reason, or preserve any peace of mind. Whether such authors have this design (whereof I think they have never gone about to acquit themselves) thus much is certain; that no other use is made of such writings: neither did I ever hear this author's book justified by any person, either Whig or Tory, except such who are of that profligate character. And I believe, whoever examines it, will be of the same opinion; although, indeed, such wretches are so numerous, that it seems rather surprising, why the book has had no more editions, than why it should have so many.

Having thus endeavoured to satisfy the curious with some account of this author's character, let us examine what might probably be the motives to engage him in such a work. I shall say nothing of the principal, which is a sum of money; because that is not a mark to distinguish him from any other trader with the press. I will say nothing of revenge and malice, from resentment of the indignities and contempt he has undergone for his crime of apostacy. To this passion he has thought fit to sacrifice order, propriety, discretion, and common sense, as may be seen in every page of his book: but I am deceived, if there were not a third motive as powerful as the other two; and that is, vanity. About the latter end of king James's reign, he had almost finished a learned discourse in defence of the church of

Rome, and to justify his conversion : all which, upon the Revolution, was quite out of season. Having thus prostituted his reputation, and at once ruined his hopes, he had no course left, but to shew his spite against religion in general ; the false pretensions to which had proved so destructive to his credit and fortune : and at the same time, loth to employ the speculations of so many years to no purpose ; by an easy turn, the same arguments he had made use of to advance popery, were full as properly levelled by him against Christianity itself ; like the image, which, while it was new and handsome, was worshipped for a saint ; and when it came to be old and broken, was still good enough to make a tolerable devil. And therefore, every reader will observe, that the arguments for popery are much the strongest of any in his book, as I shall farther remark when I find them in my way.

There is one circumstance in his title-page, which I take to be not amiss, where he calls his book, 'Part the First.' This is a project to fright away answerers, and make the poor advocates for religion believe, he still keeps farther vengeance in petto. It must be allowed, he has not wholly lost time while he was of the Romish communion. This very trick he learned from his old father, the pope ; whose custom it is to lift up his hand, and threaten to fulminate, when he never meant to shoot his bolts ; because the princes of Christendom had learned the secret to avoid or despise them. Dr Hickes knew this very well, and therefore, in his answer to this "Book of Rights," where a second part is threatened, like a rash person he desperately cries, "Let it come." But I, who have too much phlegm to provoke angry wits of his standard, must tell the author, that the doctor

plays the wag, as if he were sure it were all grimace. For my part, I declare, if he writes a second part, I will not write another answer; or if I do, it shall be published before the other part comes out. *

There may have been another motive, although it be hardly credible, both for publishing this work, and threatening a second part: it is soon conceived how far the sense of a man's vanity will transport him. This man must have somewhere heard, that dangerous enemies have been often bribed to silence with money or preferment: And therefore, to show how formidable he is, he has published his first essay; and in hopes of hire to be quiet, has frightened us with his design of another. What must the clergy do in these unhappy circumstances? If they should bestow this man bread enough to stop his mouth, it will but open those of a hundred more, who are every whit as well qualified to rail as he. And truly, when I compare the former enemies to Christianity, such as Socinus, Hobbes, and Spinoza, with such of their successors, as Toland, Asgil, Coward, Gildon, this author of the Rights, and some others; the church appears to me like the sick old lion in the fable, who, after having his person outraged by the bull, the elephant, the horse, and the bear, took nothing so much to heart as to find himself at last insulted by the spurn of an ass.

* Tindal did, however, attempt to maintain his ground against his numerous opponents, in "A Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church, against a late Visitation Sermon, 8vo. 1707;" and also in "A Second Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church, considered in two late Indictments against a Bookseller and his Servant for selling one of the said Books, 1707."

I will now add a few words, to give the reader some general notion of the nature and tendency of the work itself.

I think I may assert, without the least partiality, that it is a treatise wholly devoid of wit or learning, under the most violent and weak endeavours and pretences to both: that it is replenished throughout with bold, rude, improbable falsehoods, and gross misinterpretations; and supported by the most impudent sophistry, and false logick, I have any where observed. To this he has added a paltry, traditional cant of priestrid and priestcraft, without reason or pretext as he applies it. And when he rails at those doctrines in popery (which no protestant was ever supposed to believe) he leads the reader, however, by the hand, to make applications against the English clergy; and then he never fails to triumph, as if he had made a very shrewd and notable stroke. And because the court and kingdom seem disposed to moderation with regard to dissenters, more perhaps than is agreeable to the hot unreasonable temper of some mistaken men among us; therefore, under the shelter of that popular opinion, he ridicules all that is sound in religion, even Christianity itself, under the names of jacobite, tackers, high church, and other terms of factious jargon. All which, if it were to be first rased from his book, (as just so much of nothing to the purpose,) how little would remain to give the trouble of an answer! To which let me add, that the spirit, or genius, which animates the whole, is plainly perceived to be nothing else but the abortive malice of an old neglected man,*

* Dr Tindal might be *neglected*, but in 1707 he was only about fifty years old, and in fact lived near 30 years afterwards.

who has long lain under the extremes of obloquy, poverty, and contempt, that have soured his temper, and made him fearless. But where is the merit of being bold, to a man that is secure of impunity to his person, and is past apprehension of any thing else? He that has neither reputation nor bread, has very little to lose, and has therefore as little to fear. And as it is usually said, "Whoever values not his own life, is master of another man's;" so there is something like it in reputation: He that is wholly lost to all regards of truth or modesty, may scatter so much calumny and scandal, that some part may perhaps be taken up before it fall to the ground; because the ill talent of the world is such, that those who will be at pains enough to inform themselves in a malicious story, will take none at all to be undeceived, nay, will be apt with some reluctance to admit a favourable truth.

To expostulate, therefore, with this author for doing mischief to religion, is to strew his bed with roses; he will reply in triumph, that this was his design; and I am loth to mortify him, by asserting he has done none at all. For I never yet saw so poor an atheistical scribble, which would not serve as a twig for sinking libertines to catch at. It must be allowed in their behalf, that the faith of Christians is not as a grain of mustard seed in comparison of theirs, which can remove such mountains of absurdities, and submit with so entire a resignation to such apostles. If these men had any share of that reason they pretend to, they would retire into Christianity, merely to give it ease. And therefore men can never be confirmed in such doctrines, until they are confirmed in their vices; which last, as we have already observed, is the principal design

of this, and all other writers, against revealed religion.

I am now opening the book which I propose to examine ; an employment, as it is entirely new to me, so it is that to which, of all others, I have naturally the greatest antipathy. And indeed, who can dwell upon a tedious piece of insipid thinking, and false reasoning, so long as I am likely to do, without sharing the infection ?

But, before I plunge into the depths of the book itself, I must be forced to wade through the shallows of a long preface.

This preface, large as we see it, is only made up of such supernumerary arguments against an independent power in the church, as he could not, without nauseous repetition, scatter into the body of his book : and it is detached, like a forlorn hope, to blunt the enemy's sword that intends to attack him. Now, I think, it will be easy to prove, that the opinion of *imperium in imperio*, in the sense he charges it upon the clergy of England, is what no one divine of any reputation, and very few at all, did ever maintain ; and that their universal sentiment in this matter is such, as few protestants did ever dispute. But if the author of the Regale, or two or three more obscure writers, have carried any points farther than scripture and reason will allow, (which is more than I know, or shall trouble myself to inquire,) the clergy of England is no more answerable for those, than the laity is for all the folly and impertinence of this treatise. And therefore, that people may not be amused, or think this man is somewhat, that he has advanced or defended any oppressed truth, or overthrown any growing dangerous errors, I will set in as clear a light as I can, what I con-

ceive to be held by the established clergy, and all reasonable protestants, in this matter.

Every body knows and allows, that in all government there is an absolute, unlimited, legislative power; which is originally in the body of the people, although, by custom, conquest, usurpation, or other accidents, sometimes fallen into the hands of one, or a few. This in England is placed in the three estates (otherwise called the two houses of parliament) in conjunction with the king. And whatever they please to enact, or to repeal in the settled forms, whether it be ecclesiastical or civil, immediately becomes law, or nullity. Their decrees may be against equity, truth, reason, and religion, but they are not against law: because law is the will of the supreme legislature, and that is themselves. And there is no manner of doubt but the same authority, whenever it pleases, may abolish Christianity, and set up the Jewish, Mahometan, and heathen religion. In short, they may do any thing within the compass of human power. And therefore, who will dispute, that the same law, which deprived the church not only of lands, misapplied to superstitious uses, but even the tithes and glebes (the ancient and necessary support of parish priests) may take away all the rest, whenever the lawgivers please, and make the priesthood as primitive, as this writer, or others of his stamp, can desire.

But as the supreme power can certainly do ten thousand things more than it ought, so there are several things which some people may think it can do, although it really cannot. For it unfortunately happens, that edicts which cannot be executed will not alter the nature of things. So, if a king and parliament should please to enact, that a woman who has been a month married is *virgo*

intacta, would that actually restore her to her primitive state? If the supreme power should resolve a corporal of dragoons to be a doctor of divinity, law, or physic, few, I believe, would trust their souls, fortunes, or bodies, to his direction; because that power is neither fit to judge or teach those qualifications which are absolutely necessary to the several professions. Put the case, that walking on the slack rope* were the only talent required by an act of parliament for making a man a bishop; no doubt, when a man had done his feat of activity in form, he might sit in the house of lords, put on his robes and his rochet, go down to his palace, receive and spend his rents; but it requires very little Christianity to believe this tumbler to be one whit more a bishop than he was before, because the law of God has otherwise decreed; which law, although a nation may refuse to receive, it cannot alter in its own nature.

And here lies the mistake of this superficial man, who is not able to distinguish between what the civil power can hinder, and what it can do. 'If the parliament can annul ecclesiastical laws, they must be able to make them, since no greater power is required for one than the other.' See preface, p. 8. This consequence he repeats above twenty times, and always in the wrong. He affects to form a few words into the shape and size of a maxim, then tries it by his ear, and according as he likes the sound or cadence, pronounces it true. Cannot I stand over a man with a great pole, and hinder him from making a watch, al-

* Perhaps the system of preferments in Lilliput may be traced to this primitive idea.

though I am not able to make one myself? If I have strength enough to knock a man on the head, does it follow I can raise him to life again? The parliament may condemn all the Greek and Roman authors; can it therefore create new ones in their stead? They may make laws, indeed, and call them canon and ecclesiastical laws, and oblige all men to observe them under pain of high treason. And so may I, who love as well as any man to have in my own family the power in the last resort, take a turnip, then tie a string to it, and call it a watch, and turn away all my servants, if they refuse to call it so too.

For my own part, I must confess that this opinion of the independent power of the church, or *imperium in imperio*, wherewith this writer raises such a dust, is what I never imagined to be of any consequence, never once heard disputed among divines, nor remember to have read, otherwise than as a scheme in one or two authors of middle rank, but with very little weight laid on it. And I dare believe, there is hardly one divine in ten that ever once thought of this matter. Yet to see a large swelling volume written only to encounter this doctrine, what could one think less, than that the whole body of the clergy were perpetually tiring the press and the pulpit with nothing else?

I remember some years ago a virtuoso writ a small tract about worms, proved them to be in more places than was generally observed, and made some discoveries by glasses. This having met with some reception, presently the poor man's head was full of nothing but worms; all we eat and drink, all the whole consistence of human bodies, and those of every other animal, the very air we breathed, in short, all nature throughout

was nothing but worms : and, by that system, he solved all difficulties, and from thence all causes in philosophy. Thus it has fared with our author, and his independent power. The attack against occasional conformity, the scarcity of coffee, the invasion of Scotland, the loss of kerseys and narrow cloths, the death of king William, the author's turning papist for preferment, the loss of the battle of Almanza, with ten thousand other misfortunes, are all owing to this *imperium in imperio*.

It will be therefore necessary to set this matter in a clear light, by inquiring whether the clergy have any power independent of the civil, and of what nature it is.

Whenever the Christian religion was embraced by the civil power in any nation, there is no doubt but the magistrates and senates were fully instructed in the rudiments of it. Besides, the Christians were so numerous, and their worship so open before the conversion of princes, that their discipline, as well as doctrine, could not be a secret : they saw plainly a subordination of ecclesiastics, bishops, priests, and deacons : that these had certain powers and employments different from the laity : that the bishops were consecrated, and set apart for that office by those of their own order : that the presbyters and deacons were differently set apart, always by the bishops : that none but the ecclesiastics presumed to pray or preach in places set apart for God's worship, or to administer the Lord's supper : that all questions, relating either to discipline or doctrine, were determined in ecclesiastical conventions. These, and the like doctrines and practices, being most of them directly proved, and the rest, by very fair consequence, deduced from the words

of our Saviour and his apostles, were certainly received as a divine law, by every prince or state which admitted the Christian religion: and consequently, what they could not justly alter afterward, any more than the common laws of nature. And, therefore, although the supreme power can hinder the clergy or church from making any new canons, or executing the old; from consecrating bishops, or refuse those that they do consecrate; or, in short, from performing any ecclesiastical office, as they may from eating, drinking, and sleeping; yet they cannot themselves perform those offices, which are assigned to the clergy by our Saviour and his apostles; or, if they do, it is not according to the divine institution, and consequently, null and void. Our Saviour tells us, "His kingdom is not of this world;" and therefore, to be sure, the world is not of his kingdom; nor can ever please him by interfering in the administration of it, since he has appointed ministers of his own, and has empowered and instructed them for that purpose: so that I believe the clergy, who, as he says, are good at distinguishing, would think it reasonable to distinguish between their power, and the liberty of exercising this power. The former they claim immediately from Christ; and the latter, from the permission, connivance, or authority of the civil government; with which the clergy's power, according to the solution I have given, cannot possibly interfere.

But, this writer, setting up to form a system upon stale, scanty topics, and a narrow circle of thought, falls into a thousand absurdities. And for a farther help, he has a talent of rattling out phrases, which seem to have sense, but have none at all: the usual fate of those who are ignorant

of the force and compass of words, without which, it is impossible for a man to write either pertinently, or intelligibly, upon the most obvious subjects.

So, in the beginning of his preface, page 4, he says, "The Church of England, being established by acts of parliament, is a perfect creature of the civil power; I mean the polity and discipline of it, and it is that which makes all the contention; for as to the doctrines expressed in the articles, I do not find high church to be in any manner of pain; but they who lay claim to the most orthodoxy can distinguish themselves out of them." It is observable in this author, that his style is naturally harsh and ungrateful to the ear, and his expressions mean and trivial; but whenever he goes about to polish a period, you may be certain of some gross defect in propriety or meaning: so, the lines just quoted, seem to run easily over the tongue; and, upon examination, they are perfect nonsense and blunder: to speak in his own borrowed phrase, what is contained in the idea of established? Surely, not existence. Does establishment give being to a thing? He might have said the same thing of Christianity in general, or the existence of God, since both are confirmed by acts of parliament. But the best is behind: for, in the next line, having named the church half a dozen times before, he now says, he means only the polity and discipline of it; as if, having spoken in praise of the art of physic, a man should explain himself, that he meant only the institution of a college of physicians into a president and fellows. And it will appear, that this author, however versed in the practice, has grossly transgressed the rules of nonsense (whose property it is neither to affirm

nor deny), since every visible assertion gathered from those few lines is absolutely false : for, where was the necessity of excepting the doctrines expressed in the articles, since these are equally creatures of the civil power, having been established by acts of parliament as well as the others? But, the church of England is no creature of the civil power, either as to its polity, or doctrines. The fundamentals of both were deduced from Christ and his apostles, and the instructions of the purest and earliest ages ; and were received as such by those princes or states who embraced Christianity, whatever prudential additions have been made to the former by human laws, which alone can be justly altered or annulled by them.

What I have already said, would, I think, be a sufficient answer to his whole preface, and indeed to the greatest part of his book, which is wholly turned upon battering down a sort of independent power in the clergy ; which few or none of them ever claimed or defended. But there being certain peculiarities in this preface, that very much set off the wit, the learning, the raillery, reasoning, and sincerity of the author ; I shall take notice of some of them, as I pass.—

But here, I hope, it will not be expected, that I should bestow remarks upon every passage in this book, that is liable to exception for ignorance, falsehood, dulness, or malice. Where he is so insipid, that nothing can be struck out for the reader's entertainment, I shall observe Horace's rule :

Quæ desperes tractata nitescere posse, relinquas.

Upon which account I shall say nothing of that great instance of his candour and judgment in re-

lation to Dr Stillingfleet, who (happening to lie under his displeasure upon the fatal test of *imperium in imperio*) is high church and jacobite, took the oaths of allegiance to save him from the gallows,* and subscribed the articles only to keep his preferment: whereas the character of that prelate is universally known to have been directly the reverse of what this writer gives him.

But, before he can attempt to ruin this damnable opinion of two independent powers, he tells us, page 6, "It will be necessary to show what is contained in the idea of government." Now, it is to be understood, that this refined way of speaking was introduced by Mr Locke; after whom the author limps as fast as he is able. All the former philosophers in the world, from the age of Socrates to ours, would have ignorantly put the question, *Quid est imperium?* But now, it seems, we must vary our phrase: and since our modern improvement of human understanding, instead of desiring a philosopher to describe or define a mouse-trap, or tell me what it is; I must gravely ask, what is contained in the idea of a mouse-trap? But then, to observe how deeply this new way of putting questions to a man's self makes him enter into the nature of things; his present business is to show us, what is contained in the idea of government. The company knows no-

* Page 5, Tindal quotes bishop Stillingfleet's Vindication of the doctrine of the Trinity, where the bishop says, that a man might be very right in the belief of an article, though mistaken in the explication of it. Upon which he observes: "These men treat the articles as they do the oath of allegiance, which, they say, obliges them not actually to assist the government, but to do nothing against it; that is, nothing that would bring them to the gallows."

thing of the matter, and would gladly be instructed; which he does in the following words, p. 6.

“ It would be in vain for one intelligent being to pretend to set rules to the actions of another, if he had it not in his power to reward the compliance with, or punish the deviations from his rules, by some good, or evil, which is not the natural consequence of those actions; since the forbidding men to do or forbear an action, on the account of that convenience or inconvenience which attends it, whether he who forbids it will or no, can be no more than advice.”

I shall not often draw such long quotations as this, which I could not forbear to offer as a specimen of the propriety and perspicuity of this author's style. And, indeed, what a light breaks out upon us all, as soon as we have read these words! how thoroughly are we instructed in the whole nature of government! what mighty truths are here discovered; and how clearly conveyed to our understanding! and, therefore, let us melt this refined jargon into the old style, for the improvement of such who are not enough conversant in the new.

If the author were one who used to talk like one of us, he would have spoken in this manner: “ I think it necessary to give a full and perfect definition of government, such as will show the nature and all the properties of it; and my definition is thus: One man will never cure another of stealing horses, merely by minding him of the pains he has taken, the cold he has got, and the shoe-leather he has lost, in stealing that horse; nay, to warn him, that the horse may kick or fling him, or cost him more than he is worth in hay and oats, can be no more than advice. For, the gallows is not the natural effect of robbing

on the highway, as heat is of fire ; and, therefore, if you will govern a man, you must find out some other way of punishment than what he will inflict upon himself."

Or, if this will not do, let us try it in another case, (which I instanced before) and in his own terms. Suppose he had thought it necessary (and I think it was as much so as the other) to show us what is contained in the idea of a mouse-trap, he must have proceeded in these terms: " It would be in vain for an intelligent being to set rules for hindering a mouse from eating his cheese, unless he can inflict upon that mouse some punishment, which is not the natural consequence of eating the cheese. For, to tell her, it may lie heavy on her stomach, that she will grow too big to get back into her hole, and the like, can be no more than advice; therefore, we must find out some other way of punishing her, which has more inconveniencies than she will ever suffer by the mere eating of cheese." After this, who is so slow of understanding, as not to have in his mind a full and complete idea of a mouse-trap? Well.—The Freethinkers may talk what they please of pedantry, and cant, and jargon of schoolmen, and insignificant terms in the writings of the clergy, if ever the most perplexed and perplexing follower of Aristotle, from Scotus to Suarez, could be a match for this author.

But the strength of his arguments is equal to the clearness of his definitions. For, having most ignorantly divided government into three parts, whereof the first contains the other two; he attempts to prove that the clergy possess none of these by a divine right. And he argues thus, p. vii. " As to a legislative power, if that belongs to the clergy by divine right, it must be

when they are assembled in convocation : but the 25th Hen. VIII., c. 19, is a bar to any such divine right, because that act makes it no less than a præmunire for them, so much as to meet without the king's writ, &c." So that the force of his argument lies here ; if the clergy had a divine right, it is taken away by the 25th of Henry the Eighth. And as ridiculous as this argument is, the preface and book are founded upon it.

Another argument against the legislative power in the clergy of England is, p. viii. that Tacitus tells us ; that in great affairs, the Germans consulted the whole body of the people : "*De minoribus rebus principes consultant, de majoribus omnes : ita tamen, ut ea quoque, quorum penes plebem arbitrium est, apud principes pertrectentur.*" *Tacitus de Moribus & Populis Germaniæ.* Upon which Tindal observes thus : "*De majoribus omnes,*" was a fundamental among our ancestors, long before they arrived in Great Britain, and matters of religion were ever reckoned among their *majora*. (See Pref. p. viii. and ix.) Now it is plain, that our ancestors, the Saxons, came from Germany : it is likewise plain, that religion was always reckoned by the heathens among their *majora* ; and it is plain, the whole body of the people could not be the clergy, and therefore the clergy of England have no legislative power.

Thirdly, p. ix. They have no legislative power, because Mr Washington, in his "Observations on the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Kings of England, shows, from undeniable authorities, that in the time of William the Conqueror, and several of his successors, there were no laws enacted concerning religion, but by the great council of the kingdom." I hope, likewise, Mr Washington observes, that this great council of the king-

dom, as appears by undeniable authorities, was sometimes entirely composed of bishops and clergy, and called the parliament, and often consulted upon affairs of state, as well as church, as it is agreed by twenty writers of those ages; and if Mr Washington says otherwise, he is an author just fit to be quoted by beaux.

Fourthly.—But it is endless to pursue this matter any farther; in that it is plain, the clergy have no divine right to make laws; because Henry VIII., Edward VI., and queen Elizabeth, with their parliaments, will not allow it them. Now, without examining what divine right the clergy have, or how far it extends; is it any sort of proof that I have no right, because a stronger power will not let me exercise it? or, does all that this author says through his preface, or book itself, offer any other sort of argument but this, or what he deduces the same way?

But his arguments and definitions are yet more supportable, than the grossness of historical remarks, which are scattered so plentifully in his book, that it would be tedious to enumerate, or to show the fraud and ignorance of them. I beg the reader's leave to take notice of one here just in my way; and the rather, because I design for the future to let hundreds of them pass without farther notice. "When," says he, p. x, "by the abolishing of the pope's power, things were brought back to their ancient channel, the parliament's right in making ecclesiastical laws revived of course." What can possibly be meant by this "ancient channel?" Why, the channel that things ran in before the pope had any power in England: that is to say, before Austin the monk converted England; before which time, it seems, the parliament had a right to make eccle-

siastical laws. And what parliament could this be? Why the lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons, met at Westminster.

I cannot here forbear reproving the folly and pedantry of some lawyers, whose opinions this poor creature blindly follows, and renders yet more absurd by his comments. The knowledge of our constitution can be only attained by consulting the earliest English histories, of which those gentlemen seem utterly ignorant, farther than a quotation or index. They would fain derive our government as now constituted, from antiquity: and because they have seen Tacitus quoted for his *Majoribus omnes*; and have read of the Goths military institution in their progress and conquests, they presently dream of a parliament. Had their reading reached so far, they might have deduced it much more fairly from Aristotle and Polybius; who both distinctly name the composition of *rex, seniores, et populus*; and the latter, as I remember particularly, with the highest approbation. The princes in the Saxon Heptarchy did indeed call their nobles sometimes together upon weighty affairs, as most other princes of the world have done in all ages. But, they made war and peace, and raised money, by their own authority: they gave or mended laws by their charters, and they raised armies by their tenures. Besides, some of those kingdoms fell in by conquests, before England was reduced under one head, and therefore could pretend no rights, but by the concessions of the conqueror.

Farther, which is more material, upon the admission of Christianity, great quantities of land were acquired by the clergy, so that the great council of the nation was often entirely of churchmen, and ever a considerable part. But our pre-

sent constitution is an artificial thing, not fairly to be traced, in my opinion, beyond Henry I. Since which time it has in every age admitted several alterations; and differs now as much, even from what it was then, as almost any two species of government described by Aristotle. And it would be much more reasonable to affirm, that the government of Rome continued the same under Justinian, as it was in the time of Scipio, because the senate and consuls still remained, although the power of both had been, for several hundred years, transferred to the emperors.

References to Tindal's Book, and Remarks upon it, which the Author left thus indigested, being hints for himself to use in answering the said Book.

REMARKS ON THE PREFACE.

Page iv, v. "IF men of opposite sentiments can subscribe the same articles, they are as much at liberty as if there were none." May not a man subscribe the whole articles, because he differs from another in the explication of one? how many oaths are prescribed, that men may differ in the explication of some part of them? Instance, &c.

Page vi. "Idea of Government." A canting pedantic way, learned from Locke; and how prettily he shows it. Instance—

Page vii. "25 Hen. VIII., c. 19, is a bar to any such divine right [of legislative power in the clergy.]" Absurd to argue against the clergy's divine right, because of the statute of Henry VIII. How does that destroy divine right? The sottish way of arguing; from what the parliament can do; from their power, &c.

Page viii. "If the parliament did not think they had a plenitude of power in this matter, they would not have damned all the canons of 1640." What does he mean? A grave divine could not answer all his playhouse and Alsatia* cant, &c. He has read Hudibras, and many plays.

Ibid. "If the parliament can annul ecclesiastical laws, they must be able to make them." Distinguish, and show the silliness, &c.

Ibid. All that he says against the discipline, he might say the same against the doctrine, nay, against the belief of a God, viz. That the legislature might forbid it. The church forms and contrives canons; and the civil power, which is compulsive, confirms them.

Page ix. "There were no laws enacted but by the great council of the kingdom." And that was very often, chiefly, only bishops.

Ibid. "Laws settled by parliament to punish the clergy." What laws were those?

Page x. "The people are bound to no laws but of their own choosing." It is fraudulent; for

* Or White-friars, then a place of asylum, and frequented by sharpers, of whose gibberish there are several specimens in Shadwell's comedy, called the Squire of Alsatia.

they may consent to what others choose, and so people often do.

Page xiv, paragraph 6. "The clergy are not supposed to have any divine legislature, because that must be superior to all worldly power; and then the clergy might as well forbid the parliament to meet but when and where they please, &c." No such consequence at all. They have a power exclusive from all others. Ordained to act as clergy, but not govern in civil affairs; nor act without leave of the civil power.

Page xxv. "The parliament suspected the love of power natural to churchmen." Truly, so is the love of pudding, and most other things desirable in this life; and in that they are like the laity, as in all other things that are not good. And therefore, they are held not in esteem for what they are like in, but for their virtues. The true way to abuse them with effect, is to tell us some faults of theirs, that other men have not, or not so much of as they, &c. Might not any man speak full as bad of senates, diets, and parliaments, as he can do about councils; and as bad of princes, as he does of bishops?

Page xxxi. "They might as well have made cardinals Campegi and de Chinuchii, bishops of Salisbury and Worcester, as have enacted that their several sees and bishopricks were utterly void." No. The legislature might determine who should not be a bishop there, but not make a bishop.

Ibid. "Were not a great number deprived by parliament upon the Restoration?" Does he mean presbyters? What signifies that?

Ibid. "Have they not trusted this power with our princes?" Why ay. But that argues not right, but power. Have they not cut off a king's

head? &c. The church must do the best they can, if not what they would.

Page xxxvi. "If tithes and first-fruits are paid to spiritual persons as such, the king or queen is the most spiritual person, &c." As if the first-fruits, &c. were paid to the king, as tithes to a spiritual person.

Page xliii. "King Charles II. thought fit that the bishops in Scotland should hold their bishopricks during will and pleasure: I do not find that high church complained of this as an encroachment, &c." No; but as a pernicious counsel of lord Loch.*

Page xliv. "The common law judges have a power to determine, whether a man has a legal right to the sacrament." They pretend it, but what we complain of as a most abominable hardship, &c.

Page xlv. "Giving men thus blindly to the devil, is an extraordinary piece of complaisance to a lay chancellor." He is something in the right; and therefore it is a pity there are any; and I hope the church will provide against it. But if the sentence be just, it is not the person, but the contempt. And if the author attacks a man on the highway, and takes but two-pence, he shall be sent to the gallows, more terrible to him than the devil, for his contempt of the law, &c.—Therefore he need not complain of being sent to hell.

Page lxiv. Mr Lesley may carry things too far, as it is natural, because the other extreme is so great. But what he says of the king's losses, since the church lands were given away, is too great a truth, &c.

* This contraction does not precisely answer to any Scottish counsellor of the period. Lord Lauderdale is probably meant.

Page lxxvi. "To which I have nothing to plead, except the zeal I have for the church of England." You will see some pages farther, what he means by the church; but it is not fair, not to begin with telling us what is contained in the idea of a church, &c.

Page lxxxiii. "They will not be angry with me for thinking better of the church than they do, &c." No, but they will differ from you; because the worse the queen is pleased you think her better. I believe the church will not concern themselves much about your opinion of them, &c.

Page lxxxiv. "But the popish, eastern, presbyterian and jacobite clergy, &c." This is like a general pardon, with such exceptions as make it useless, if we compute it, &c.

Page lxxxvii. "Misapplying of the word church, &c." This is cavilling. No doubt his project is for exempting the people; but that is not what in common speech we usually mean by the church. Besides, who does not know that distinction?

Ibid. "Constantly apply the same ideas to them." This is in old English, meaning the same thing.

Page lxxxix. "Demonstrates I could have no designs but the promoting of truth, &c." Yes, several designs, as money, spleen, atheism, &c. What? will any man think truth was his design, and not money and malice? Does he expect the house will go into a committee for a bill to bring things to his scheme, to confound every thing? &c.

Some deny Tindal to be the author, and produce stories of his dullness and stupidity. But what is there in all this book, that the dullest man in England might not write, if he were angry and bold enough, and had no regard to truth?

REMARKS UPON A BOOK, &c.

Page 4. "WHETHER Lewis XIV. has such a power over Philip V.?" He speaks here of the unlimited, uncontrollable authority of fathers. A very foolish question; and his discourse hitherto, of government, weak and trivial, and liable to objections.

Ibid. "Whom he is to consider not as his own, but the Almighty's workmanship." A very likely consideration for the ideas of the state of nature. A very wrong deduction of paternal government; but that is nothing to the dispute, &c.

Page 12. "And as such might justly be punished by every one in the state of nature." False; he does not seem to understand the state of nature, although he has borrowed it from Hobbes, &c.

Page 14. "Merely speculative points, and other indifferent things, &c." And why are speculative opinions so insignificant? do not men proceed in their practice according to their speculations? so, if the author were a chancellor, and one of his speculations were, that the poorer the clergy the better; would not that be of great use, if a cause came before him of tithes or church-lands?

Ibid. "Which can only be known by examining whether men had any power in the state of nature over their own, or others actions, in these

matters." No, that is a wrong method, unless where religion has not been revealed; in natural religion, &c.

Ibid. "Nothing at first sight can be more obvious, than that in all religious matters, none could make over the right of judging for himself, since that would cause his religion to be absolutely at the disposal of another." At his rate of arguing (I think I do not misrepresent him, and I believe he will not deny the consequence) a man may profess Heathenism, Mahometism, &c. gain as many proselytes as he can; and they may have their assemblies, and the magistrate ought to protect them, provided they do not disturb the state: and they may enjoy all secular preferments, be lords chancellors, judges, &c. But there are some opinions in several religions, which, although they do not directly make men rebel, yet lead to it. Nay we might have temples for idols, &c. A thousand such absurdities follow from his general notions, and ill-digested schemes. And we see in the Old Testament, that kings were reckoned good or ill, as they suffered or hindered image-worship and idolatry, &c. which was limiting conscience.

Page 15. "Men may form what clubs, companies, or meetings they think fit, &c. which the magistrate, as long as the public sustains no damage, cannot hinder, &c." This is false; although the public sustain no damage, they will forbid clubs where they think danger may happen.

Page 16. "The magistrate is as much obliged to protect them in the way they choose of worshipping him, as in any other indifferent matter."

—Page 17. "The magistrate to treat all his subjects alike, how much soever they differ from him or one another in these matters." This

shows, that although they be Turks, Jews, or Heathens, it is so. But we are sure Christianity is the only true religion, &c. and therefore it should be the magistrate's chief care to propagate it; and that God should be worshipped in that form, that those who are the teachers think most proper, &c.

Page 18. "So that persecution is the most comprehensive of all crimes, &c." But he has not told us what is included in the idea of persecution. State it right.

Ibid. "But here it may be demanded, if a man's conscience make him do such acts, &c." This does not answer the above objection: For, if the public be not disturbed with atheistical principles preached, nor immoralities, all is well. So that still men may be Jews, Turks, &c.

Page 22. "The same reason which obliges them to make statutes of mortmain, and other laws, against the people's giving estates to the clergy, will equally hold for their taking them away when given." A great security for property! Will this hold to any other society in the state, as merchants, &c. or only to ecclesiastics? A petty project: Forming general schemes requires a deeper head than this man's.

Ibid. "But the good of the society being the only reason of the magistrate's having any power over men's properties, I cannot see why he should deprive his subjects of any part thereof, for the maintenance of such opinions as have no tendency that way, &c." Here is a paragraph (vide also infra) which has a great deal in it. The meaning is, that no man ought to pay tithes, who does not believe what the minister preaches. But how came they by this property? When they purchased the land, they paid only for so much; and the

tithes were exempted. It is an older title than any man's estate is; and if it were taken away to-morrow, it could not, without a new law, belong to the owners of the other nine parts, any more than impropriations do.

Ibid. "For the maintenance of such opinions, as no ways contribute to the public good." By such opinions as the public receive no advantage by, he must mean Christianity.

Page 23. "Who by reason of such articles are divided into different sects." A pretty cause of sects! &c.

Page 24. "So the same reason, as often as it occurs, will oblige him to leave that church." This is an excuse for his turning papist.

Ibid. "Unless you suppose churches like traps, easy to admit one; but when once he is in, there he must always stick, either for the pleasure or profit of the trap-setters." Remark his wit.

Page 29. "Nothing can be more absurd than maintaining there must be two independent powers in the same society, &c." This abominably absurd; show it.

Page 33. "The whole hierarchy as built on it, must necessarily fall to the ground, and great will be the fall of this spiritual Babylon." I will do him justice, and take notice, when he is witty, &c.

Page 36. "For if there may be two such [independent powers] in every society on earth, why may there not be more than one in heaven?" A delicate consequence.

Page 37. "Without having the less, he could not have the greater, in which that is contained." Sophistical; instance wherein.

Page 42. "Some since, subtler than the Jews,

have managed commutations more to their own advantage, by enriching themselves, and begging, if Fame be not a liar, many an honest dissenter." It is fair to produce witnesses, is she a liar or not? The report is almost impossible. Commutations were contrived for roguish registers and proctors, and lay chancellors, but not for the clergy.

Page 43. "Kings and people, who (as the Indians do the devil) adored the pope out of fear." I am in doubt, whether I shall allow that for wit or not, &c. Look you, in these cases, preface it thus: If one may use an old saying.

Page 44. "One reason why the clergy make what they call schism, to be so heinous a sin." There it is now; because he has changed churches, he ridicules schism; as Milton wrote for divorces, because he had an ill wife. For ten pages on, we must give the true answer, that makes all these arguments of no use.

Page 60. "It possibly will be said, I have all this while been doing these gentlemen a great deal of wrong." To do him justice, he sets forth the objections of his adversaries with great strength, and much to their advantage. No doubt those are the very objections we would offer.

Page 68. "Their executioner." He is fond of this word in many places, yet there is nothing in it farther than it is the name for the hangman, &c.

Page 69. "Since they exclude both from having any thing in the ordering of church matters." Another part of his scheme: for, by this, the people ought to execute ecclesiastical offices without distinction, for he brings the other opinion as an absurd one.

Page 72. "They claim a judicial power, and by virtue of it, the government of the church, and thereby (pardon the expression) become traitors both to God and man." Who does he desire to pardon him? or is this meant of the English clergy? so it seems. Does he desire them to pardon him? they do it as Christians. Does he desire the government to do it? but then how can they make examples? He says, the clergy do so, &c. so he means all.

Page 74. "I would gladly know what they mean by giving the Holy Ghost." Explain what is really meant by giving the Holy Ghost, like a king empowering an ambassador.*

Page 76. "The popish clergy make very bold with the Three Persons of the Trinity." Why then, don't mix them; but we see whom this glances on most. As to the *Congé d' élire*, and *Nolo episcopari*, not so absurd; and if omitted, why changed.

Page 78. "But not to digress"—Pray does he call scurrility upon the clergy, a digression? The apology needless, &c.

Ibid. "A clergyman, it is said, is God's ambassador." But you know an ambassador may have a secretary, &c.

Ibid. "Call their pulpit speeches the word of God." That is a mistake.

Page 79. "Such persons to represent him." Are not they that own his power, fitter to represent him than others? Would the author be a fitter person?

Ibid. "Puffed up with intolerable pride and

* See Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. § 77.

insolence." Not at all; for where is the pride to be employed by a prince, whom so few own, and whose being is disputed by such as this author?

Ibid. "Perhaps from a poor servitor, &c. to be a prime minister in God's kingdom." That is right. God takes notice of the difference between poor servitors, &c. Extremely foolish—show it. The argument lies strongly against the apostles, poor fishermen; and St Paul, a tent-maker. So gross and idle!

Page 80. "The formality of laying hand over head on a man." A pun; but an old one. I remember, when Swan* made that pun first, he was severely checked for it.

Ibid. "What more is required to give one a right, &c." Here show, what power is in the church, and what in the state, to make priests.

Page 85. "To bring men into, and not turn them out of the ordinary way of salvation." Yes; but as one rotten sheep does mischief—and do you think it reasonable, that such a one as this author should converse with Christians, and weak ones?

Ibid. See his fine account of spiritual punishment.

Page 87. "The clergy affirm, that if they had not the power to exclude men from the church, its unity could not be preserved." So to expel an ill member from a college, would be to divide the college; as in All-Souls, &c. Apply it to him.

Page 88. "I cannot see but it is contrary to the rules of charity, to exclude men from the

* Captain Swan was a celebrated low humourist and punster, who frequented Will's Coffee-house, when it was the fashionable resort of the men of wit and pleasure.

church, &c.” All this turns upon the falsest reasoning in the world. So, if a man be imprisoned for stealing a horse, he is hindered from other duties: And you might argue, that a man who does ill, ought to be more diligent in minding other duties, and not to be debarred from them. It is for contumacy and rebellion against that power in the church which the law has confirmed. So a man is outlawed for a trifle, upon contumacy.

Page 92. “Obliging all by penal laws to receive the sacrament.” This is false.

Page 93. “The want of which means can only harden a man in his impenitence.” It is for his being hardened, that he is excluded. Suppose a son robs his father in the highway, and his father will not see him till he restores the money, and owns his fault. It is hard to deny him paying his duty in other things, &c. How absurd this!

Page 95. “And that only they had a right to give it.” Another part of his scheme, that the people have a right to give the sacrament. See more of it, p. 135 and 137.

Page 96. “Made familiar to such practices by the heathen priests.” Well; and this shows the necessity of it for peace sake. A silly objection of this and other enemies to religion, to think to disgrace it by applying heathenism, which only concerns the political part, wherein they were as wise as others, and might give rules. Instance, in some, &c.

Page 98. “How differently from this do the great pretenders to primitive practice act, &c.” This is a remarkable passage. Does he condemn or allow this mysterious way? It seems the first; and therefore these words are a little turned, but

infallibly stood in the first draught as a great argument for popery.

Page 100. "They dress them up in a Sanbenito." So, now we are to answer for the inquisition. One thing is, that he makes the fathers guilty of asserting most of the corruptions about the power of priests.

Page 104. "Some priests assume to themselves an arbitrary power of excluding men from the Lord's Supper." His scheme; that any body may administer the sacraments, women, or children, &c.

Page 108. "One no more than another can be reckoned a priest." See his scheme. Here he disgraces what the law enacts, about the manner of consecrating, &c.

Page 118. "Churches serve to worse purposes than bear-gardens." This from Hudibras.

Page 119. "In the time of that wise heathen Ammianus Marcellinus." Here he runs down all Christianity in general.

Page 120. "I shall, in the following part of my discourse, show that this doctrine is so far from serving the ends of religion, that, 1. It prevents the spreading of the gospel, &c." This independent power in the church is like the worms: being the cause of all diseases.

Page 124. "How easily could the Roman emperors have destroyed the church?" Just as if he had said, how easily could Herod kill Christ while a child, &c.

Page 125. "The people were set against bishops by reason of their tyranny." Wrong; for the bishops were no tyrants: their power was swallowed up by the popes, and the people desired they should have more. It was the regulars that

tyrannised and formed priestcraft. He is ignorant.

Page 139. "He is not bound by the laws of Christ to leave his friends in order to be baptized, &c." This directly against the gospel.—One would think him an emissary, by his preaching schism.

Page 142. "Then will the communion of saints be practicable, to which the principles of all parties, the occasional conformists only excepted, stand in direct opposition, &c." So that all are wrong but they. The scripture is fully against schism. Tindal promotes it, and places in it all the present and future happiness of man.

Page 144. All he has hitherto said on this matter, with a very little turn, were arguments for popery: for it is certain, that religion had share in very few wars for many hundred years before the Reformation, because they were all of a mind. It is the ambition of rebels, preaching upon the discontents of sectaries, that they are not supreme, which has caused wars for religion. He is mistaken altogether. His little narrow understanding and want of learning.

Page 145. "Though some say the high-fliers lives might serve for a very good rule, if men would act quite contrary to them." Is he one of those some? Beside the new turn of wit, &c. all the clergy in England come under his notion of high-fliers, as he states it.

Page 147. "None of them (churchmen) could be brought to acknowledge it lawful upon any account whatever, to exclude the duke of York." This account false in fact.

Ibid. "And the body politic, whether ecclesiastical or civil, must be dealt with after the same manner as the body natural." What, because it

is called a body, and is a simile, must it hold in all circumstances?

Page 148. "We find all wise legislators have had regard to the tempers, inclinations, and prejudices, &c." This paragraph false.—It was directly contrary in several, as Lycurgus, &c.

Page 152. "All the skill of the prelatists is not able to discover the least distinction between bishop and presbyter." Yet, God knows, this hath been done many a time.

Page 158. "The epistle to the Philippians is directed to the bishops and deacons; I mean in due order after the people, viz. to the saints, with their bishops and deacons!" I hope he would argue from another place, that the people precede the king, because of these words; "Ye shall be destroyed, both you and your king."

Page 161. "The pope and other great church dons." I suppose he means bishops; but I wish he would explain himself, and not be so very witty in the midst of an argument; it is like two mediums; not fair in disputing.

Page 167. "Clemens Romanus blames the people, not for assuming a power, but for making a wrong use of it, &c." His great error all along is, that he does not distinguish between a power, and a liberty of exercising that power, &c. I would appeal to any man, whether the clergy have not too little power, since a book like his, that unsettles foundations, and would destroy all, goes unpunished, &c.

Page 171. "By this or some such method the bishops obtained their power over their fellow presbyters, and both over the people. The whole tenor of the gospel directly contrary to it." Then it is not an allowable means: This carries it so

far as to spoil his own system ; it is a sin to have bishops as we have them.

Page 172. " The preservation of peace and unity, and not any divine right, was the reason of establishing a superiority of one of the presbyters over the rest. Otherwise there would, as they say, have been as many schismatics as presbyters. No great compliment to the clergy of those days." Why so? It is the natural effect of a worse independency, which he keeps such a clatter about ; an independency of churches on each other which must naturally create schism.

Page 183. " How could the Christians have asserted the disinterestedness of those who first preached the gospel, particularly their having a right to the tenth part?" Yes, that would have passed easy enough ; for they could not imagine teachers could live on air ; and their heathen priests were much more unreasonable.

Page 184. " Mens suffering for such opinions is not sufficient to support the weight of them." This is a glance against Christianity. State the case of convert infidels ; the converters are supposed few ; the bulk of the priests must be of the converted country. It is their own people therefore they maintain. What project or end can a few converters propose? they can leave no power to their families, &c. State this, I say, at length, and give it a true turn. Princes give corporations power to purchase lands.

Page 187. " That it became an easy prey to the barbarous nations." Ignorance in Tindal. The empire long declined before Christianity was introduced. This a wrong cause, if ever there was one.

Page 190. " It is the clergy's interest to have religion corrupted." Quite the contrary ; prove

it. How is it the interest of the English clergy to corrupt religion? The more justice and piety the people have, the better it is for them; for that would prevent the penury of farmers, and the oppression of exacting covetous landlords, &c. That which has corrupted religion, is the liberty unlimited of professing all opinions. Do not lawyers render law intricate by their speculations, &c. And physicians, &c.

Page 209. "The spirit and temper of the clergy, &c." What does this man think the clergy are made of? Answer generally to what he says against councils in the ten pages before. Suppose I should bring quotations in their praise.

Page 211. "As the clergy, though few in comparison of the laity, were the inventors of corruptions." His scheme is, that the fewer and poorer the clergy the better, and the contrary among the laity. A noble principle; and delicate consequences from it!

Page 207. "Men are not always condemned for the sake of opinions, but opinions sometimes for the sake of men." And so, he hopes, that if his opinions are condemned, people will think it is a spite against him, as having been always scandalous.

Page 210. "The meanest layman as good a judge as the greatest priest, for the meanest man is as much interested in the truth of religion as the greatest priest." As if one should say, the meanest sick man has as much interest in health as a physician, therefore is as good a judge of physic as a physician, &c.

Ibid. "Had synods been composed of laymen, none of those corruptions which tend to advance the interest of the clergy, &c." True. But the part the laity had in reforming, was little more

than plundering. He should understand that the nature of things is this, that the clergy are made of men, and without some encouragement they will not have the best, but the worst.

Page 215. "They who gave estates to, rather than they who took them from, the clergy, were guilty of sacrilege." Then the people are the church, and the clergy not; another part of his scheme.

Page 219. "The clergy as they subsisted by the alms of the people, &c." This he would have still. Show the folly of it. Not possible to show any civilized nation ever did it. Who would be clergymen then? The absurdity appears by putting the case, that none were to be statesmen, lawyers, or physicians, but who were to subsist by alms.

Page 222. "These subtle clergymen work their designs, who lately cut out such a tacking job for them, &c." He is mistaken—every body was for the bill almost, though not for the tack. The bishop of Sarum was for it, as appears by his speech against it. But it seems, the tacking is owing to metaphysical speculations. I wonder whether is most perplexed, this author in his style, or the writings of our divines. In the judgment of all people, our divines have carried practical preaching and writing to the greatest perfection it ever arrived to; which shows, that we may affirm in general, our clergy is excellent, although this or that man be faulty. As if an army be constantly victorious, regular, &c. we may say, it is an excellent victorious army: but, Tindal, to disparage it, would say, such a serjeant ran away; such an ensign hid himself in a ditch; nay, one colonel turned his back, therefore it is a corrupt, cowardly army, &c.

Page 224. "They were as apprehensive of the works of Aristotle, as some men are of the works of a late philosopher, which, they are afraid, will let too much light into the world." Yet just such another; only a commentator on Aristotle. People are likely to improve their understanding much with Locke: it is not his Human Understanding, but other works, that people dislike, although in that there are some dangerous tenets, as that of no innate ideas.

Page 226. "Could they, like the popish priests, add to this a restraint on the press, their business would be done." So it ought: For example, to hinder his book, because it is written to justify the vices and infidelity of the age. There can be no other design in it. For, is this a way or manner to do good? railing does but provoke. The opinion of the whole parliament is, the clergy are too poor.

Ibid. "When some nations could be no longer kept from prying into learning, this miserable gibberish of the schools was contrived." We have exploded schoolmen as much as he, and in some people's opinion too much, since the liberty of embracing any opinion is allowed; they following Aristotle, who is doubtless the greatest master of arguing in the world: but it has been a fashion of late years to explode Aristotle, and, therefore, this man has fallen into it like others, for that reason, without understanding him. Aristotle's poetry, rhetoric, and politics, are admirable; and, therefore, it is likely, so are his logics.

Page 230. "In these freer countries, as the clergy have less power, so religion is better understood, and more useful and excellent discourses are made on that subject, &c." Not generally. Holland not very famous, Spain has been,

and France is. But it requires more knowledge than his, to form general rules, which people strain (when ignorant) to false deductions to make them out.

Page 232. Chap. VII. That this hypothesis of an independent power in any set of clergymen, makes all reformation unlawful, except where those who have this power do consent. The title of this chapter, a Truism.

Page 234. "If God has not placed mankind in respect to civil matters under an absolute power, but has permitted them in every society to act as they judge best for their own safety, &c." Bad parallels; bad politics; want of due distinction between teaching and government. The people may know when they are governed well, but not be wiser than their instructors. Show the difference.

Ibid. "If God has allowed the civil society these privileges, can we suppose he has less kindness for his church, &c.?" Here they are distinguished then, here it makes for him. It is a sort of turn of expression, which is scarce with him, and he contradicts himself to follow it.

Page 235. "This cursed hypothesis had, perhaps, never been thought on with relation to civils, had not the clergy (who have an inexhaustible magazine of oppressive doctrines) contrived first in ecclesiasticals, &c." The seventh paragraph furious and false. Were there no tyrants before the clergy, &c.?

Page 236. "Therefore in order to serve them, though I expect little thanks, &c." And why so? Will they not, as you say, follow their interest? I thought you said so. He has three or four spritely turns of this kind, that look as if he thought he had done wonders, and had put all

the clergy in a ferment. Whereas, I do assure him, there are but two things wonderful in his book: First, how any man in a Christian country could have the boldness and wickedness to write it: And how any government would neglect punishing the author of it, if not as an enemy to religion, yet as a profligate trumpeter of sedition. These are hard words, got by reading his book.

Ibid. "The light of nature, as well as the gospel, obliges people to judge of themselves, &c. to avoid false prophets, seducers, &c." The legislature can turn out a priest, and appoint another ready-made, but not make one; as you discharge a physician, and may take a farrier; but he is no physician, unless made as he ought to be.

Ibid. "Since no more power is required for the one than the other." That is, I dislike my physician, and can turn him off, therefore I can make any man a physician, &c. *Cujus est destruere, &c.* Jest on it: Therefore, because he lays schemes for destroying the church, we must employ him to raise it again. See what danger lies in applying maxims at random. So, because it is the soldiers' business to knock men on the head, it is theirs likewise to raise them to life, &c.

Page 237. "It can belong only to the people to appoint their own ecclesiastical officers." This word "people" is so delicious in him, that I cannot tell what is included in the idea of the "people." Does he mean the rabble or the legislature, &c.? In this sense it may be true, that the legislature gives leave to the bishops to appoint, and they appoint themselves; I mean, the executive power appoints, &c. He shows his ignorance in government. As to high church, he carries it a prodigious way, and includes, in the idea of it, more than others will allow.

Page 239. "Though it be customary to admit none to the ministry who are not approved by the bishops or priests, &c." One of his principles to expose.

Ibid. "If every one has not an inherent right to choose his own guide, then a man must be either of the religion of his guide, or, &c." That would make delicate work in a nation: what would become of all our churches? They must dwindle into conventicles. Show what would be the consequence of this scheme in several points. This great reformer, if his projects were reduced to practice, how many thousand sects, and consequently tumults, &c. Men must be governed in speculations, at least not suffered to vent them, because opinions tend to actions, which are most governed by opinions, &c. If those who write for the church writ no better, they would succeed but scurvily. But to see whether he be a good writer, let us see when he has published his second part.

Page 253. "An excellent author in his preface to the account of Denmark." This man judges and writes much of a level. Molesworth's preface full of stale profligate topics. That author wrote his book in spite to a nation, as this does to religion, and both perhaps on poor personal piques.*

Ibid. "By which means, and not by any difference in speculative matters, they are more rich and populous." As if ever any body thought that a difference in speculative opinions made men richer or poorer; for example, &c.

* Mr, afterwards lord, Molesworth's account of Denmark was severely animadverted upon by Dr King, who pointed out many gross mistakes and misrepresentations,

Page 258. "Play the Devil for God's sake." If this is meant for wit, I would be glad to observe it; but in such cases I first look whether there be common sense, &c.

Page 261. "Christendom has been the scene of perpetual wars, massacres, &c." He does not consider, that most religious wars have been caused by schisms, when the dissenting parties were ready to join with any ambitious discontented man. The national religion always desires peace, even in her notions, for its interests.

Page 270. "Some have taken the liberty to compare a high church priest in politics, to a monkey in a glass-shop, where, as he can do no good, so he never fails of doing mischief enough." That is his modesty, it is his own simile, and it rather fits a man that does so and so, meaning himself. Besides, the comparison is foolish: so it is with men as with stags.

Page 276. "Their interest obliges them directly to promote tyranny." The matter is, that Christianity is the fault that spoils the priests, for they were like other men before they were priests. Among the Romans, priests did not do so; for they had the greatest power during the republic. I wonder he did not prove they spoiled Nero.

Page 277. "No princes have been more insupportable, and done greater violence to the commonwealth, than those the clergy have honoured for saints and martyrs." For example in our country, the princes most celebrated by our clergy are, &c. &c. &c. And the quarrels since the Conquest were nothing at all of the clergy, but purely of families, &c. wherein the clergy only joined like other men.

Page 279. "After the Reformation, I desire

to know whether the conduct of the clergy was any ways altered for the better, &c." Monstrous misrepresentation! Does this man's spirit of declaiming let him forget all truth of fact, as here, &c.? Show it. Or does he flatter himself, a time will come in future ages, that men will believe it on his word? In short, between declaiming, between misrepresenting, and falseness, and charging popish things, and independency huddled together, his whole book is employed.

Set forth at large the necessity of union in religion, and the disadvantage of the contrary, and answer the contrary in Holland, where they have no religion, and are the worst constituted government in the world to last. It is ignorance of causes and appearances which makes shallow people judge so much to their advantage. They are governed by the administration and almost legislature of Holland, through advantage of property, nor are they fit to be set in balance with a noble kingdom, &c. like a man that gets a hundred pounds a year by hard labour, and one that has it in land.

Page 280. "It may be worth inquiring, whether the difference between the several sects in England, &c." A noble notion started, that union in the church must enslave the kingdom; reflect on it. This man has somewhere heard, that it is a point of wit to advance paradoxes, and the bolder the better. But the wit lies in maintaining them, which he neglects, and forms imaginary conclusions from them, as if they were true and uncontested.

He adds, "That in the best constituted church, the greatest good which can be expected of the ecclesiastics, is, from their divisions." This is a maxim deduced from a gradation of false suppositions. If a man should turn the tables, and ar-

gue that all the debauchery, atheism, licentiousness, &c. of the times, were owing to the poverty of the clergy, &c. what would he say? There have been more wars of religion since the ruin of the clergy, than before, in England. All the civil wars before were from other causes.

Page 283. "Prayers are made in the loyal university of Oxford, to continue the throne free from the contagion of schism. See Mather's sermon on the 29th of May, 1705." Thus he ridicules the university, while he is eating their bread.* The whole university comes with the most loyal addresses, yet that goes for nothing. If one indiscreet man drops an indiscreet word, all must answer for it.

Page 286. "By allowing all, who hold no opinions prejudicial to the state, and contribute equally with their fellow-subjects to its support, equal privileges in it." But who denies that of the dissenters? The Calvinist scheme, one would not think proper for monarchy. Therefore, they fall in with the Scotch, Geneva, and Holland; and when they had strength here, they pulled down the monarchy. But I will tell an opinion they hold prejudicial to the state in his opinion; and that is, that they are against toleration, of which, if I do not show him ten times more instances from their greatest writers, than he can do of passive obedience among the clergy, I have done.

"Does not justice demand, that they who alike contribute to the burden, should alike receive the advantage?" Here is another of his maxims closely put, without considering what exceptions may be made. The papists have contributed doubly (being so taxed), therefore, by this rule,

* Tindal, as already mentioned, was a Fellow of All Souls College.

they ought to have double advantage. Protection in property, leave to trade and purchase, &c. are enough for a government to give. Employments in a state are a reward for those who entirely agree with it, &c. For example, a man who upon all occasions declared his opinion of a commonwealth to be preferable to a monarchy, would not be a fit man to have employments; let him enjoy his opinion, but not be in a capacity of reducing it to practice, &c.

Page 287. "There can be no alteration in the established mode of church discipline, which is not made in a legal way." Oh! but there are several methods to compass this legal way, by cunning, faction, industry. The common people, he knows, may be wrought upon by priests; these may influence the faction, and so compass a very pernicious law, and in a legal way ruin the state; as king Charles I. began to be ruined in a legal way, by passing bills, &c.

Page 288. "As every thing is persecution which puts a man in a worse condition than his neighbours." It is hard to think sometimes whether this man is hired to write for, or against dissenters, and the sects. This is their opinion, although they will not own it so roundly. Let this be brought to practice: make a quaker lord chancellor, who thinks paying tithes unlawful. And bring other instances to show that several employments affect the church.

Ibid. "Great advantages which both church and state have got by the kindness already shown to dissenters." Let them then be thankful for that. We humour children for their good sometimes, but too much may hurt. Observe that this 64th paragraph just contradicts the former. For, if we have advantage by kindness shown dissen-

ters, then there is no necessity of banishment, or death.

Page 290. "Christ never designed the holy sacrament should be prostituted to serve a party. And that people should be bribed by a place to receive unworthily." Why, the business is, to be sure, that those who are employed, are of the national church; and the way to know it, is, by receiving the sacrament, which all men ought to do in their own church; and if not, are hardly fit for an office; and if they have those moral qualifications he mentions, joined to religion, no fear of receiving unworthily. And for this there might be a remedy: to take an oath that they are of the same principles, &c. for that is the end of receiving; and that it might be no bribe, the bill against occasional conformity would prevent entirely.

Ibid. "Preferring men not for their capacity, but their zeal to the church." The misfortune is, that if we prefer dissenters to great posts, they will have an inclination to make themselves the national church, and so there will be perpetual struggling; which case may be dangerous to the state. For, men are naturally wishing to get over others to their own opinion: witness this writer, who has published as singular and absurd notions as possible, yet has a mighty zeal to bring us over to them, &c.

Page 292. Here are two pages of scurrilous faction, with a deal of reflections on great persons. Under the notion of high churchmen, he runs down all uniformity and church government. Here is the whole lower house of convocation, which represents the body of the clergy, and both universities, treated with rudeness, by an obscure, corrupt member, while he is eating their bread.

Page 294. "The reason why the middle sort of people retain so much of their ancient virtue, &c. is because no such pernicious notions are the ingredients of their education; which it is a sign are infinitely absurd, when so many of the gentry and nobility can, notwithstanding their prepossessions, get clear of them." Now the very same argument lies against religion, morality, honour, and honesty; which are, it seems, but prejudices of education, and too many get clear of them. The middle sort of people have other things to mind than the factions of the age. He always assigns many causes, and sometimes with reason, since he makes imaginary effects. He quarrels at power being lodged in the clergy: when there is no reasonable protestant, clergy or laity, who will not readily own the inconveniences by too great power and wealth, in any one body of men, ecclesiastics, or seculars: but, on that account to weed up the wheat with the tares; to banish all religion, because it is capable of being corrupted; to give unbounded licence to all sects, &c.—And if heresies had not been used with some violence in the primitive age, we should have had, instead of true religion, the most corrupt one in the world.

Page 316. "The Dutch, and the rest of our presbyterian allies, &c." The Dutch will hardly thank him for this appellation. The French huguenots, and Geneva protestants themselves, and others, have lamented the want of episcopacy, and approved ours, &c. In this and the next paragraph, the author introduces the arguments he formerly used, when he turned papist in king James's time; and loth to lose them, he gives them a new turn; and they are the strongest in his book, at least have most artifice.

Page 333. " 'Tis plain, all the power the bishops have, is derived from the people, &c." In general the distinction lies here. The permissive power of exercising jurisdiction lies in the people, or legislature, or administrator of a kingdom; but not of making him a bishop: as a physician that commences abroad, may be suffered to practise in London, or be hindered; but they have not the power of creating him a doctor, which is peculiar to a university. This is some allusion; but the thing is plain, as it seems to me, and wants no subterfuge, &c.

Page 338. " A journeyman bishop to ordain for him." Does any man think, that writing at this rate does the author's cause any service? is it his wit or his spleen that he cannot govern?

Page 364. " Can any have a right to an office, without having a right to do those things in which the office consists?" I answer, the ordination is valid. But a man may prudentially forbid to do some things: as a clergyman may marry without licence or banns; the marriage is good; yet he is punishable for it.

Page 368. " A choice made by persons who have no right to choose, is an error of the first concoction." That battered simile again! this is hard. I wish physicians had kept that a secret, it lies so ready for him to be witty with.

Page 370. " If prescription can make mere nullities to become good and valid, the laity may be capable of all manner of ecclesiastical power, &c." There is a difference; for, here the same way is kept, although there might be breaches; but it is quite otherwise, if you alter the whole method from what it was at first. We see bishops: there always were bishops: it is the old way still. So a family is still held the same, al-

though we are not sure of the purity of every one of the race.

Page 380. "It is said, that every nation is not a complete body politic within itself, as to ecclesiasticals. But the whole church, say they, composes such a body, and Christ is the head of it. But Christ's headship makes Christians no more one body politic, with respect to ecclesiasticals, than to civils." Here we must show the reason and necessity of the church being a corporation all over the world; to avoid heresies, and preserve fundamentals, and hinder the corrupting of scripture, &c. But there are no such necessities in government, to be the same every where, &c. It is something like the colleges in a university; they are all independent, yet joined, are one body. So a general council consisteth of many persons independent of one another, &c.

However, there is such a thing as *jus gentium*, &c. And he that is doctor of physic, or law, is so in any university in Europe, like the *Respublica Litteraria*. Nor to me does there seem any thing contradicting, or improper in this notion of the catholic church; and for want of such a communion, religion is so much corrupted, and would be more, if there were not more communion in this than in civils. It is of no import to mankind how nations are governed; but the preserving the purity of religion is best held up by endeavouring to make it one body over the world. Something like as there is in trade. So to be able to communicate with all Christians we come among, is at least to be wished and aimed at, as much as we can.

Page 384. "In a word, if the bishops are not supreme, &c." Here he reassumes his arguments

for popery, that there cannot be a body politic of the church through the whole world, without a visible head to have recourse to. These were formerly writ to advance popery, and now to put an absurdity upon the hypothesis of a catholic church. As they say in Ireland, in king James's time they built mass-houses, which we make very good barns of.

Page 388. "Bishops are under a premunire, obliged to confirm and consecrate the person named in the *cong  d'  lire*." This perhaps is complained of. He is permitted to do it. We allow the legislature may hinder, if they please; as they may turn out Christianity, if they think fit.

Page 389. "It is the magistrate who empowers them to do more for other bishops than they can for themselves, since they cannot appoint their own successors." Yes they could, if the magistrate would let them. Here is an endless splutter, and a parcel of perplexed distinctions upon no occasion. All that the clergy pretend to, is a right of qualifying men for the ministry, something like what a university doth with degrees. This power they claim from God, and that the civil power cannot do it as pleasing to God without them; but they may choose whether they will suffer it or not. A religion cannot be crammed down a nation's throat against their will; but when they receive a religion, it is supposed they receive it as their converters give it; and upon that foot, they cannot justly mingle their own methods, that contradict that religion, &c.

Page 390. "With us the bishops act only ministerially, and by virtue of the regal commission, by which the prince firmly enjoins and commands them to proceed in choosing, confirming, and con-

secrating, &c.” Suppose we held it unlawful to do so: how can we help it? But does that make it rightful, if it be not so? Suppose the author lived in a heathen country, where a law would be made to call Christianity idolatrous; would that be a topic for him to prove it so by, &c. And why do the clergy incur a premunire; to frighten them? Because the law understandeth, that, if they refuse, the chosen cannot be a bishop. But, if the clergy had an order to do it otherwise than they have prescribed, they ought and would incur a hundred rather.

Page 402. “ I believe the catholic church, &c.” Here he ridicules the Apostles Creed. Another part of his scheme. By what he says in these pages, it is certain, his design is either to run down Christianity, or set up popery; the latter it is more charitable to think, and, from his past life, highly probable.

Page 405. “ That which gave the papists so great advantage was, clergymen’s talking so very inconsistent with themselves, &c.” State the difference here between our separation from Rome, and the dissenters from us, and show the falseness of what he says. I wish he would tell us what he leaves for a clergyman to do, if he may not instruct the people in religion, and if they should not receive his instructions.

Page 411. “ The restraint of the press a badge of popery.” Why is that a badge of popery? why not restrain the press to those who would confound religion, as in civil matters? But this toucheth himself. He would starve perhaps, &c. Let him get some honest livelihood then. It is plain, all his arguments against constraint, &c. favour the papists as much as dissenters; for

both have opinions that may affect the peace of the state.

Page 413. "Since this discourse, &c." And must we have another volume on this one subject of independency? or, is it to fright us? I am not of Dr Hickeys's mind, *Qu'il vient*. I pity the readers, and the clergy that must answer it, be it ever so insipid. Reflect on this sarcastic conclusion, &c.

MR COLLINS'S DISCOURSE
OF
FREETHINKING ;
PUT INTO PLAIN ENGLISH,
BY WAY OF ABSTRACT,
FOR THE USE OF THE POOR.
BY A FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR.
FIRST PRINTED IN 1713.

Handwritten text, possibly a name or title, appearing as a faint, mirrored bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.

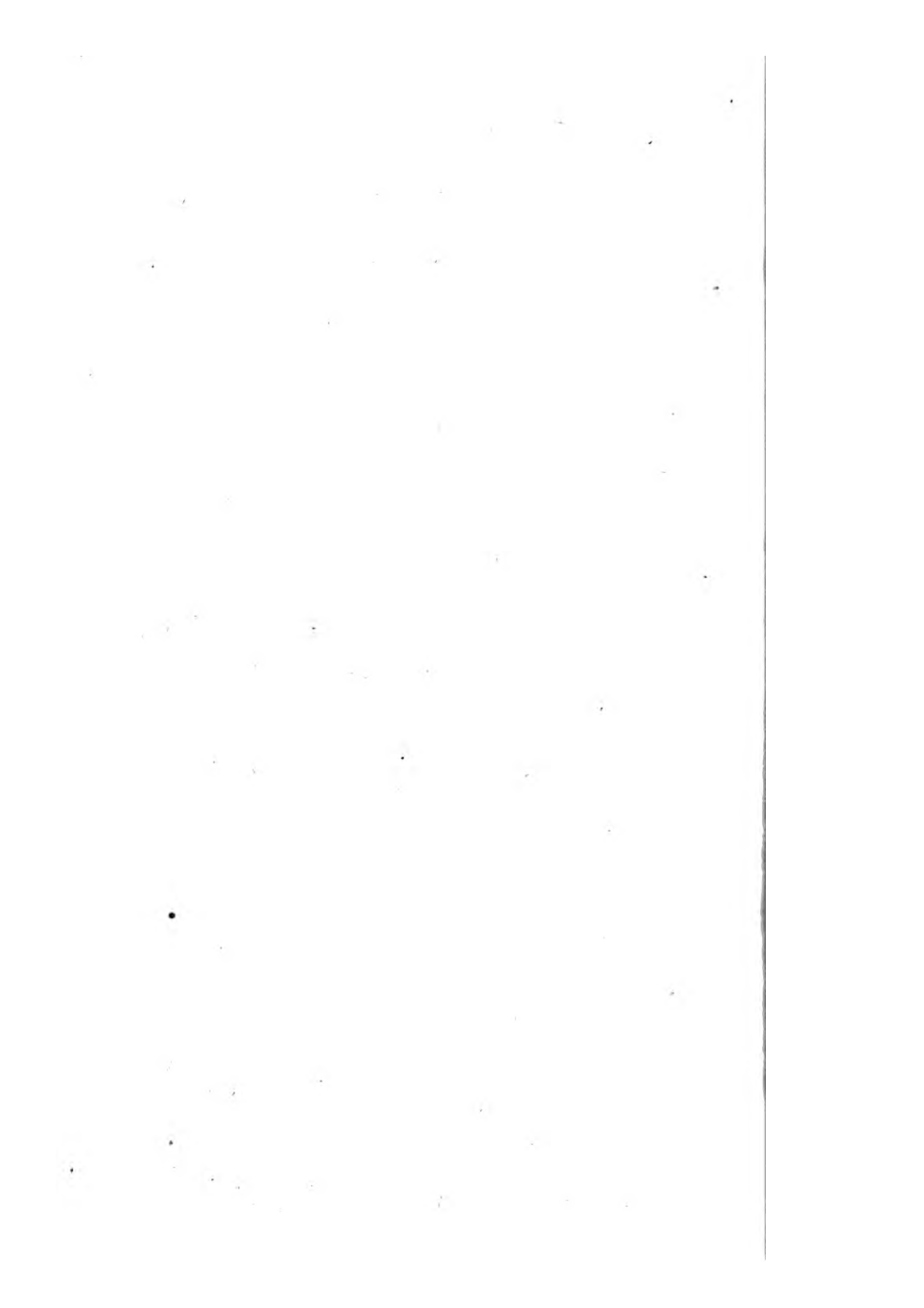
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Handwritten text, possibly a name or title, appearing as a faint, mirrored bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.

MR COLLINS'S DISCOURSE, &c.

ANTHONY COLLINS, the celebrated Deist, who, notwithstanding his sceptical opinions, retained the friendship of Locke, published, in 1713, his "Discourse of Freethinking, occasioned by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Freethinkers." It is believed to have been printed at the Hague, though the title-page bears London. Like Tindal, Collins pretended only to assail the encroachments of the Pagan and of the Romish priesthood, while his real drift was to undervalue and bring to contempt the established clergy of all countries and ages, to ridicule the Mosaical law, to weaken the evidences of revealed religion, and even to controvert, by insinuation at least, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The treatise attracted much notice, and drew forth an host of answerers, among whom Whiston, Hare, Hoadley, and Bentley, were most conspicuous.

Swift also mingled in the controversy, yet rather with a political than a religious view. For, although the politics of the learned men and divines above-mentioned were opposite to his own, he has not hesitated, in his ironical defence of Collins, to assume the character of a Whig, as if to identify the deistical opinions of that author with those of the opponents of the Tory ministry. What gave a colour, though only a colour, to this charge was, that Toland, Tindal, Collins, and most of those who carried to license their abhorrence of church-government, were naturally enough enrolled among that party in politics, who professed most attachment to freedom of sentiment; and in this, as in many other cases, the vices, or scandalous opinions, of a small part of a political body were unjustly held up as its general characteristics. Swift, himself, had reason loudly to complain of similar treatment in the succeeding reign, when, because the Jacobites were the enemies of government, all who opposed the ministry were called Jacobites. Laying aside consideration of this ungenerous advantage, the treatise is in itself most admirable.



INTRODUCTION.

OUR party having failed, by all their political arguments, to re-establish their power, the wise leaders have determined that the last and principal remedy should be made use of for opening the eyes of this blinded nation ; and that a short, but perfect system of their divinity should be published, to which we are all of us ready to subscribe, and which we lay down as a model, bearing a close analogy to our schemes in religion. Crafty designing men, that they might keep the world in awe, have, in their several forms of government, placed a supreme power on earth, to keep mankind in fear of being hanged ; and a supreme power in heaven for fear of being damned. In order to cure men's apprehensions of the former, several of our learned members have written many profound treatises on anarchy ; but a brief complete body of Atheology seemed yet wanting till this irrefragable discourse appeared. However, it so happens, that our ablest brethren, in their elaborate disquisitions upon this subject, have written with so much caution, that ignorant unbelievers have edified very little by them. I grant that those daring spirits, who first ventured to write against the direct rules of the gospel, the current of antiquity, the religion of the magistrate, and the laws of the land, had some measures to keep ; and particularly when they rail-

ed at religion, were in the right to use little artful disguises, by which a jury could only find them guilty of abusing heathenism or popery. But the mystery is now revealed, that there is no such thing as mystery or revelation; and though our friends are out of place and power, yet we may have so much confidence in the present ministry, to be secure, that those who suffer so many free speeches against their sovereign and themselves to pass unpunished, will never resent our expressing the freest thoughts against their religion; but think with Tiberius, that, if there be a God, he is able enough to revenge any injuries done to himself, without expecting the civil power to interpose.

By these reflections I was brought to think, that the most ingenious author of the Discourse upon Freethinking, in a letter to Somebody, esq., although he has used less reserve than any of his predecessors, might yet have been more free and open. I considered, that several well-willers to infidelity, might be discouraged by a show of logic, and a multiplicity of quotations, scattered through his book; which, to understandings of that size, might carry an appearance of something like book-learning, and consequently fright them from reading for their improvement. I could see no reason why these great discoveries should be hid from our youth of quality, who frequent White's and Tom's; why they should not be adapted to the capacities of the Kit-Cat and Hanover clubs, who might then be able to read lectures on them to their several toasts: and it will be allowed on all hands, that nothing can sooner help to restore our abdicated cause, than a firm universal belief of the principles laid down by this sublime author: for I am sensible that nothing

would more contribute to "the continuance of the war," and the restoration of the late ministry, than to have the doctrines delivered in this treatise well infused into the people. I have therefore compiled them into the following Abstract, wherein I have adhered to the very words of our author; only adding some few explanations of my own, where the terms happen to be too learned, and consequently a little beyond the comprehension of those for whom the work was principally intended, I mean the nobility and gentry of our party: after which, I hope, it will be impossible for the malice of a jacobite, highflying, priestridden faction, to misrepresent us. The few additions I have made are for no other use than to help the transition, which could not otherwise be kept in an abstract: but I have not presumed to advance any thing of my own; which, besides, would be needless to an author who has so fully handled and demonstrated every particular. I shall only add, that though this writer, when he speaks of priests, desires chiefly to be understood to mean the English clergy; yet he includes all priests whatsoever, except the ancient and modern heathens, the Turks, Quakers, and Socinians.

THE LETTER.

SIR,

I SEND you this apology for Freethinking,* without the least hopes of doing good, but purely to comply with your request; for those truths which nobody can deny, will do no good to those who deny them. The clergy, who are so impudent to teach the people the doctrines of faith, are all either cunning knaves or mad fools; for none but artificial designing men, and crack-brained enthusiasts, presume to be guides to others in matters of speculation, which all the doctrines of Christianity are; and whoever has a mind to learn the Christian religion, naturally chooses such knaves and fools to teach them. Now the Bible, which contains the precepts of the priests' religion, is the most difficult book in the world to be understood: it requires a thorough knowledge in natural, civil, ecclesiastical history, law, husbandry, sailing, physic, pharmacy, mathematics, metaphysics, ethics, and every thing else that can be named: and every body who believes it ought to understand it, and must do so by force of his own freethinking, without any guide or instructor.

How can a man think at all, if he does not think freely? A man who does not eat and drink freely,

* The chief strain of Collins's Discourse is an eulogium upon the necessity and advantage of Freethinking; in which it is more than insinuated, that the advocates of revealed religion are enemies to the progress of enlightened inquiry. This insidious position is ridiculed in the following parody.

does not eat and drink at all. Why may not I be denied the liberty of freeseeing as well as free-thinking? Yet nobody pretends that the first is unlawful, for a cat may look on a king; though you be near-sighted, or have weak or sore eyes, or are blind, you may be a freeseer; you ought to see for yourself, and not trust to a guide to choose the colour of your stockings, or save you from falling into a ditch.

In like manner, there ought to be no restraint at all on thinking freely upon any proposition, however impious or absurd. There is not the least hurt in the wickedest thoughts, provided they be free; nor in telling those thoughts to every body, and endeavouring to convince the world of them; for all this is included in the doctrine of freethinking, as I shall plainly show you in what follows: and therefore you are all along to understand the word freethinking in this sense.

If you are apt to be afraid of the devil, think freely of him, and you destroy him and his kingdom. Freethinking has done him more mischief than all the clergy in the world ever could do: they believe in the devil, they have an interest in him, and therefore are the great supports of his kingdom. The devil was in the States-General before they began to be freethinkers: for England and Holland* were formerly the Christian territories of the devil. I told you how he left Holland; and freethinking and the revolution banished him from England; I defy all the clergy to shew me when they ever had such success against him. My meaning is, that to think freely

* Collins is supposed to have imbibed his freethinking philosophy during his repeated visits to Holland.

of the devil, is to think there is no devil at all; and he that thinks so, the devil is in him if he be afraid of the devil.

But, within these two or three years, the devil has come into England again; and Dr Sacheverell has given him commission to appear in the shape of a cat, and carry old women about upon broomsticks: and the devil has now so many "ministers ordained to his service," that they have rendered freethinking odious, and nothing but the second coming of Christ can restore it.

The priests tell me, I am to believe the Bible; but freethinking tells me otherwise in many particulars. The Bible says, the Jews were a nation favoured by God; but I, who am a freethinker, say, that cannot be, because the Jews lived in a corner of the earth, and freethinking makes it clear that those who live in corners cannot be favourites of God. The New Testament all along asserts the truth of Christianity; but freethinking denies it: because Christianity was communicated but to a few; and whatever is communicated but to a few, cannot be true; for that is like whispering, and the proverb says, "that there is no whispering without lying."

Here is a society in London for propagating freethinking throughout the world, encouraged and supported by the queen and many others. You say, perhaps, it is for propagating the gospel. Do you think the missionaries we send will tell the heathens that they must not think freely? No, surely; why then, it is manifest, those missionaries must be freethinkers, and make the heathens so too. But why should not the king of Siam, whose religion is heathenism and idolatry, send over a parcel of his priests to convert us to his church, as well as we send missionaries there?

Both projects are exactly of a piece, and equally reasonable; and if those heathen priests were here, it would be our duty to hearken to them, and think freely whether they may not be in the right rather than we. : I heartily wish a detachment of such divines as Dr Atterbury, Dr Smallridge, Dr Swift, Dr Sacheverell and some others, were sent every year to the farthest part of the heathen world, and that we had a cargo of their priests in return, who would spread freethinking among us. ! Then the war would go on, the late ministry be restored, and faction cease; which our priests inflame by haranguing upon texts, and falsely call that "preaching the gospel."

I have another project in my head, which ought to be put in execution, in order to make us freethinkers. It is a great hardship and injustice, that our priests must not be disturbed while they are prating in the pulpit. For example: why should not William Penn the Quaker, or any Anabaptist, Papist, Muggletonian, Jew, or sweet-singer, have liberty to come into St Paul's church, in the midst of divine service, and endeavour to convert first the aldermen, then the preacher, and singing-men? or pray, why might not poor Mr Whiston, * who denies the divinity of Christ, be allowed to come into the lower house of convocation, and convert the clergy? But, alas! we are overrun with such false notions, that, if Penn or Whiston should do their duty, they would be reckoned fanatics, and disturbers of the holy synod; although they have as good a title to it as St Paul

* Yet Whiston, who receives this side-cut, was himself an anxious combatant of Collins, in his *Reflections on an Anonymous Pamphlet, entitled, A Defence of Freethinking.* 1713.

had to go into the synagogues of the Jews; and their authority is full as divine as his.

Christ himself commands us to be freethinkers; for he bids us search the scriptures, and take heed what and whom we hear: by which he plainly warns us, not to believe our bishops and clergy; for Jesus Christ, when he considered that all the Jewish and heathen priests, whose religion he came to abolish, were his enemies, rightly concluded that those appointed by him to preach his own gospel would probably be so too; and could not be secure that any set of priests, of the faith he delivered, would ever be otherwise: therefore it is fully demonstrated that the clergy of the church of England are mortal enemies to Christ, and ought not to be believed.

But, without the privilege of freethinking, how is it possible to know which is the right scripture? Here are perhaps twenty sorts of scriptures in the several parts of the world, and every set of priests contends that their scripture is the true one. The Indian bramins have a book of scripture called the Shaster; the Persees their Zundivastaw; the bonzes in China have theirs, written by the disciples of Fohe, whom they call "God and Saviour of the world, who was born to teach the way of salvation, and to give satisfaction for all men's sins:" which, you see, is directly the same with what our priests pretend of Christ. And must we not think freely, to find out which are in the right, whether the bishops or the bonzes? But the talapoins, or heathen clergy of Siam, approach yet nearer to the system of our priests; they have a book of scripture written by Somnocodam, who, the Siamese say, was "born of a virgin," and was "the God expected by the universe;" just as our priests tell us, that Jesus

Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, and was the Messiah so long expected. The Turkish priests or dervises, have their scripture which they call the Alcoran. The Jews have the Old Testament for their scripture, and the Christians have both the Old and the New. Now, among all these scriptures, there cannot above one be right; and how is it possible to know which is that, without reading them all, and then thinking freely, every one of us for ourselves, without following the advice or instruction of any guide, before we venture to choose? The parliament ought to be at the charge of finding a sufficient number of these scriptures, for every one of her majesty's subjects; for, there are twenty to one against us, that we may be in the wrong: but a great deal of free-thinking will at last set us all right, and every one will adhere to the scripture he likes best; by which means, religion, peace, and wealth, will be for ever secured in her majesty's realms.

And it is the more necessary that the good people of England should have liberty to choose some other scripture, because all Christian priests differ so much about the copies of theirs, and about the various readings of the several manuscripts, which quite destroys the authority of the Bible: for what authority can a book pretend to, where there are various readings? * And for this reason, it is manifest that no man can know the opinions of Aristotle or Plato, or believe the facts related by Thucydides or Livy, or be pleased with the poetry of Homer and Virgil, all which books are utterly useless, upon account of their various readings.

* In the discourse on Freethinking, p. 80, Collins insists much on a passage in Victor of Tunis, from which he infers, that the gospels were corrected and altered in the fourth century.

Some books of scripture are said to be lost, and this utterly destroys the credit of those that are left : some we reject, which the Africans and Copticks receive ; and why may we not think freely, and reject the rest? Some think the scriptures wholly inspired, some partly ; and some not at all. Now this is just the very case of the bramins, Persees, bonzes, talapoins, dervises, rabbis, and all other priests, who build their religion upon books, as our priests do upon their Bibles. They all equally differ about the copies, various readings and inspirations, of their several scriptures ; and God knows which are in the right : freethinking alone can determine it.

It would be endless to show in how many particulars the priests of the heathen and Christian churches, differ about the meaning even of those scriptures which they universally receive as sacred. But, to avoid prolixity, I shall confine myself to the different opinions among the priests of the church of England ; and here only give you a specimen, because even these are too many to be enumerated.

I have found out a bishop, (though indeed his opinions are condemned by all his brethren,) who allows the scriptures to be so difficult, that God has left them rather as a trial of our industry, than a repository of our faith, and furniture of creeds and articles of belief ; with several other admirable schemes of freethinking, which you may consult at your leisure.

The doctrine of the Trinity is the most fundamental point of the whole Christian religion. Nothing is more easy to a freethinker : yet what different notions of it do the English priests pretend to deduce from scripture, explaining it by “ specific unities, eternal modes of subsistence, and

the like unintelligible jargon ! Nay, it is a question whether this doctrine be fundamental or not ; for though Dr South and Bishop Bull affirm it, yet Bishop Taylor and Dr Wallis deny it. And that excellent freethinking prelate Bishop Taylor observes, that Athanasius's example was followed with too much greediness : by which means it has happened, that the greater number of our priests are in that sentiment, and think it necessary to believe the Trinity, and incarnation of Christ.*

Our priests likewise dispute several circumstances about the resurrection of the dead, the nature of our bodies after the resurrection, and in what manner they shall be united to our souls. They also attack one another "very weakly, with great vigour," about predestination. And it is certainly true, (for Bishop Taylor and Mr Whiston the Socinian say so,) that all churches in prosperity alter their doctrines every age, and are neither satisfied with themselves nor their own confessions ; neither does any clergyman of sense believe the Thirty-nine Articles.

Our priests differ about the eternity of hell torments. The famous Dr Henry More, and the most pious and rational of all priests, Dr Tillotson (both freethinkers,) believe them to be not eternal. They differ about keeping the sabbath, the divine right of episcopacy, and the doctrine of original sin ; which is the foundation of the whole Christian religion ; for, if men are not liable to be damned for Adam's sin, the Christian religion is an imposture : yet this is now disputed among them ; so is lay baptism : so was formerly the law-

* See Swift's opinion of controversies on this subject, in his Sermon upon the Trinity.

fulness of usury ; but now the priests are common stock-jobbers, attorneys, and scriveners. In short, there is no end of disputing among priests : and therefore I conclude, that there ought to be no such thing in the world as priests, teachers, or guides, for instructing ignorant people in religion ; but that every man ought to think freely for himself.

I will tell you my meaning in all this. The priests dispute every point in the Christian religion, as well as almost every text in the Bible : and the force of my argument lies here, that whatever point is disputed by one or two divines, however condemned by the church, not only that particular point, but the whole article to which it relates, may lawfully be received or rejected by any freethinker. For instance, suppose More and Tillotson deny the eternity of hell torments, a freethinker may deny all future punishments whatsoever. The priests dispute about explaining the Trinity ; therefore a freethinker may reject one or two, or the whole three persons ; at least, he may reject Christianity, because the Trinity is the most fundamental doctrine of that religion. So I affirm original sin, and that men are now liable to be damned for Adam's sin, to be the foundation of the whole Christian religion ; but this point was formerly, and is now, disputed ; therefore a freethinker may deny the whole. And I cannot help giving you one farther direction, how I insinuate all along, that the wisest freethinking priests, whom you may distinguish by the epithets I bestow on them, were those who differed most from the generality of their brethren.

But, besides, the conduct of our priests in many other points makes freethinking unavoidable ; for, some of them own, that the doctrines of the

church are contradictory to one another, as well as to reason; which I thus prove: Dr Sacheverell says, in his speech at his trial, "That, by abandoning passive obedience, we must render ourselves the most inconsistent church in the world;" *ergo*, there must have been a great many inconsistencies and contradictory doctrines in the church before. Dr South describes the incarnation of Christ as an astonishing mystery, impossible to be conceived by man's reason; *ergo*, it is contradictory to itself, and to reason, and ought to be exploded by all freethinkers.

Another instance of the priests' conduct, which multiplies freethinkers, is their acknowledgment of abuses, defects, and false doctrines, in the church; particularly that of eating black pudding, which is so plainly forbid in the Old and New Testament, that I wonder those who pretend to believe a syllable in either will presume to taste it. Why should I mention the want of discipline, and of a sideboard at the altar, with complaints of other great abuses and defects made by some of the priests, which no man can think on without freethinking, and consequently rejecting Christianity?

When I see an honest freethinking bishop endeavour to destroy the power and privileges of the church, and Dr Atterbury angry with him for it, and calling it "dirty work;" what can I conclude, by virtue of being a freethinker, but that Christianity is all a cheat?

Mr Whiston has published several tracts, wherein he absolutely denies the divinity of Christ. A bishop tells him, "Sir, in any matter where you have the church's judgment against you, you should be careful not to break the peace of the church, by writing against it, though you are

sure you are in the right."* Now my opinion is directly contrary; and I affirm, that if ten thousand freethinkers thought differently from the received doctrine, and from each other, they would be all in duty bound to publish their thoughts, provided they were all sure of being in the right, though it broke the peace of the church and state ten thousand times.

And here I must take leave to tell you, although you cannot but have perceived it from what I have already said, and shall be still more amply convinced by what is to follow, that freethinking signifies nothing, without freespeaking and free-writing. It is the indispensable duty of a freethinker, to endeavour forcing all the world to think as he does, and by that means make them freethinkers too. You are also to understand, that I allow no man to be a freethinker, any farther than as he differs from the received doctrines of religion. Where a man falls in, though by perfect chance, with what is generally believed, he is in that point a confined and limited thinker; and you shall see by and by, that I celebrate those for the noblest freethinkers in every age, who differed from the religion of their countries in the most fundamental points, and especially in those which bear any analogy to the chief fundamentals of religion among us.

Another trick of the priests is, to charge all men with atheism, who have more wit than themselves; which therefore I expect will be my case for writing this discourse. This is what makes them so implacable against Mr Gildon, Dr Tindal,

* Swift's Sermon on the Trinity, as well as a passage in his Thoughts upon Religion, shews the weight which he attached to this important argument.

Mr Toland, and myself; and when they call us wits atheists, it provokes us to be freethinkers.

Again: the priests cannot agree when their scripture was written. They differ about the number of canonical books, and the various readings. Now those few among us who understand Latin, are careful to tell this to our disciples, who presently fall a freethinking, that the Bible is a book not to be depended upon in any thing at all.

There is another thing, that mightily spreads freethinking, which I believe you would hardly guess. The priests have got a way of late of writing books against freethinking; I mean, treatises in dialogue, where they introduce atheists, deists, sceptics, and Socinians, offering their several arguments. Now these freethinkers are too hard for the priests themselves in their own books. And how can it be otherwise? For, if the arguments usually offered by atheists are fairly represented in these books, they must needs convert every body that reads them; because atheists, deists, sceptics, and Socinians, have certainly better arguments to maintain their opinions, than any the priests can produce to maintain the contrary.

Mr Creech, a priest, translated Lucretius into English, which is a complete system of atheism; and several young students, who were afterward priests, wrote verses in praise of this translation. The arguments against Providence in that book are so strong, that they have added mightily to the number of freethinkers.

Why should I mention the pious cheats of the priests, who in the New Testament translate the word *ecclesia* sometimes the *church*, and sometimes the *congregation*; and *episcopus*, sometimes a *bishop*, and sometimes an *overseer*? A priest translating

a book, left out a whole passage that reflected on the king, by which he was an enemy to political freethinking, a most considerable branch of our system. Another priest, translating a book of travels, left out a lying miracle, out of mere malice, to conceal an argument for freethinking. In short, these frauds are very common in all books which are published by priests. But, however, I love to excuse them whenever I can: and as to this accusation, they may plead the authority of the ancient fathers of the church, for forgery, corruption, and mangling authors, with more reason than for any of their articles of faith. St Jerom, St Hilary, Eusebius Vercellensis, Victorinus, and several others, were all guilty of arrant forgery and corruption: for, when they translated the works of several freethinkers, whom they called heretics, they omitted all their heresies or freethinkings, and had the impudence to own it to the world.

From these many notorious instances of the priests' conduct, I conclude they are not to be relied on in any one thing relating to religion; but that every man must think freely for himself.

But to this it may be objected, that the bulk of mankind is as well qualified for flying as thinking; and if every man thought it his duty to think freely, and trouble his neighbour with his thoughts (which is an essential part of freethinking,) it would make wild work in the world. I answer; whoever cannot think freely, may let it alone if he pleases, by virtue of his right to think freely; that is to say, if such a man freely thinks that he cannot think freely, of which every man is a sufficient judge, why then he need not think freely, unless he thinks fit.

Besides, if the bulk of mankind cannot think freely in matters of speculation, as the being of a

God, the immortality of the soul, &c. why then, freethinking is indeed no duty: but then the priests must allow, that men are not concerned to believe whether there is a God or not. But still those who are disposed to think freely, may think freely if they please.

It is again objected, that freethinking will produce endless divisions in opinion, and by consequence disorder society. To which I answer,

When every single man comes to have a different opinion every day from the whole world, and from himself, by virtue of freethinking, and thinks it his duty to convert every man to his own freethinking, as all we freethinkers do; how can that possibly create so great a diversity of opinions, as to have a set of priests agree among themselves to teach the same opinions in their several parishes to all who will come to hear them? Besides, if all people were of the same opinion, the remedy would be worse than the disease; I will tell you the reason some other time.

Besides, difference in opinion, especially in matters of great moment, breeds no confusion at all. Witness papist and protestant, roundhead and cavalier, and whig and tory, now among us. I observe, the Turkish empire is more at peace within itself, than Christian princes are with one another. Those noble Turkish virtues of charity and toleration are what contribute chiefly to the flourishing state of that happy monarchy. There Christians and Jews are tolerated, and live at ease, if they can hold their tongues and think freely, provided they never set foot within the mosques, nor write against Mahomet. A few plunderings now and then by the janissaries are all they have to fear.

It is objected, that by freethinking, men will think themselves into atheism; and indeed I have

allowed all along, that atheistical books convert men to freethinking. But suppose that to be true, I can bring you two divines, who affirm superstition and enthusiasm to be worse than atheism, and more mischievous to society: and in short it is necessary that the bulk of the people should be atheists or superstitious.

It is objected, that priests ought to be relied on by the people, as lawyers and physicians, because it is their faculty. I answer, It is true, a man who is no lawyer, is not suffered to plead for himself. But every man may be his own quack if he pleases, and he only ventures his life; but in the other case, the priest tells him he must be damned: therefore do not trust the priest, but think freely for yourself; and if you happen to think there is no hell, there certainly is none, and consequently you cannot be damned. I answer farther, that wherever there is no lawyer, physician, or priest, the country is paradise. Besides, all priests, (except the orthodox, and those are not ours, nor any that I know,) are hired by the public to lead men into mischief: but lawyers and physicians are not; you hire them yourself.

It is objected, (by priests, no doubt, but I have forgot their names,) that false speculations are necessary to be imposed upon men, in order to assist the magistrate in keeping the peace; and that men ought therefore to be deceived, like children, for their own good. I answer, That zeal for imposing speculations, whether true or false, (under which name of speculations I include all opinions of religion, as the belief of a God, providence, immortality of the soul, future rewards and punishments, &c.) has done more hurt, than it is possible for religion to do good. It puts us to the charge of maintaining ten thousand priests

in England, which is a burden upon society never felt on any other occasion: and a greater evil to the public, than if these ecclesiastics were only employed in the most innocent offices of life, which I take to be eating and drinking. Now if you offer to impose any thing on mankind beside what relates to moral duties, as to pay your debts, not pick pockets, nor commit murder, and the like; that is to say, if, beside this, you oblige them to believe in God and Jesus Christ, what you add to their faith, will take just so much off from their morality. By this argument, it is manifest that a perfect moral man must be a perfect atheist; every inch of religion he gets loses him an inch of morality: for there is a certain *quantum* belongs to every man, of which there is nothing to spare. This is clear from the common practice of all our priests: they never once preach to you, to love your neighbour, to be just in your dealings, or to be sober and temperate. The streets of London are full of common whores, publicly tolerated in their wickedness; yet the priests make no complaints against this enormity, either from the pulpit or the press: I can affirm, that neither you nor I, sir, have ever heard one sermon against whoring since we were boys. No, the priests allow all these vices, and love us the better for them, provided we will promise not "to harangue upon a text," nor to sprinkle a little water in a child's face, which they call baptizing, and would engross it all to themselves.

Besides, the priests engage all the rogues, villains, and fools, in their party, in order to make it as large as they can: by this means they seduced Constantine the Great over to their religion, who was the first Christian emperor, and so horrible a villain, that the heathen priests told him they could not expiate his crimes in their

church; so he was at a loss to know what to do, till an Ægyptian bishop assured him, that there was no villany so great, but was to be expiated by the sacraments of the Christian religion: upon which he became a Christian, and to him that religion owes its first settlement.

It is objected, that freethinkers themselves are the most infamous, wicked, and senseless, of all mankind.

I answer, first, we say the same of priests and other believers. But the truth is, men of all sects are equally good and bad; for no religion whatsoever contributes in the least to mend men's lives.

I answer, secondly, that freethinkers use their understanding; but those who have religion, do not: therefore the first have more understanding than the others; witness Toland, Tindal, Gildon, Clendon, Coward, and myself. For, use legs, and have legs.

I answer, thirdly, that freethinkers are the most virtuous persons in the world; for all freethinkers must certainly differ from the priests, and from nine hundred ninety-nine of a thousand of those among whom they live; and are, therefore, virtuous of course, because every body hates them.

I answer, fourthly, that the most virtuous people, in all ages, have been freethinkers; of which I shall produce several instances.*

Socrates was a freethinker; for he disbelieved the gods of his country, and the common creeds about them, and declared his dislike when he heard men attribute "repentance, anger, and other pas-

* What follows is in ridicule of a long list of Freethinkers, as he calls them, with which Collins has graced his discourse, in which he includes not only the ancient philosophers, but the inspired prophets, and even "King Solomon the wise."

sions to the gods, and talk of wars and battles in heaven, and of the gods getting women with child," and such like fabulous and blasphemous stories. I pick out these particulars, because they are the very same with what the priests have in their bibles, where repentance and anger are attributed to God; where it is said, there was "war in heaven;" and that "the Virgin Mary was with child by the Holy Ghost," whom the priests call God; all fabulous and blasphemous stories. Now I affirm Socrates to have been a true Christian. You will ask, perhaps, how that can be, since he lived three or four hundred years before Christ? I answer, with Justin Martyr, that Christ is nothing else but reason; and I hope you do not think Socrates lived before reason. Now, this true Christian Socrates never made notions, speculations, or mysteries, any part of his religion; but demonstrated all men to be fools who troubled themselves with inquiries into heavenly things. Lastly, it is plain that Socrates was a freethinker, because he was calumniated for an atheist, as freethinkers generally are, only because he was an enemy to all speculations and inquiries into heavenly things. For I argue thus, that, if I never trouble myself to think whether there be a God or not, and forbid others to do it, I am a freethinker, but not an atheist.

Plato was a freethinker; and his notions are so like some in the gospel, that a heathen charged Christ with borrowing his doctrine from Plato. But Origen defends Christ very well against this charge, by saying he did not understand Greek, and therefore could not borrow his doctrine from Plato. However, their two religions agreed so well, that it was common for Christians to turn Platonists, and Platonists Christians. When the Christians found out this, one of their zealous

priests (worse than any atheist) forged several things under Plato's name, but conformable to Christianity, by which the heathens were fraudulently converted.

Epicurus was the greatest of all freethinkers, and consequently the most virtuous man in the world. His opinions in religion were the most complete system of atheism that ever appeared. Christians ought to have the greatest veneration for him, because he taught a higher point of virtue than Christ; I mean, the virtue of friendship, which, in the sense we usually understand it, is not so much as named in the New Testament.

Plutarch was a freethinker, notwithstanding his being a priest, but indeed he was a heathen priest. His freethinking appears by showing the innocence of atheism (which at worst is only false reasoning), and the mischiefs of superstition; and he explains what superstition is, by calling it a conceit of immortal ills after death, the opinion of hell torments, dreadful aspects, doleful groans, and the like. He is likewise very satirical upon the public forms of devotion in his own country, a qualification absolutely necessary to a freethinker; yet those forms which he ridicules, are the very same that now pass for true worship in almost all countries: I am sure, some of them do so in ours; such as abject looks, distortions, wry faces, beggarly tones, humiliation and contrition.

Varro, the most learned among the Romans, was a freethinker; for he said, the heathen divinity contained many fables below the dignity of immortal beings: such, for instance, as Gods begotten and proceeding from other Gods. These two words I desire you will particularly remark, because they are the very terms made use of by our priests in their doctrine of the Trinity. He says likewise, that there are many things false

in religion, and so say all freethinkers ; but then he adds, " which the vulgar ought not to know, but it is expedient they should believe." In this last he, indeed, discovers the whole secret of a statesman and politician, by denying the vulgar the privilege of freethinking ; and here I differ from him. However, it is manifest from hence, that the Trinity was an invention of statesmen and politicians.

The grave and wise Cato, the censor, will for ever live in that noble freethinking saying—" I wonder," said he, " how one of our priests can forbear laughing when he sees another!" For, contempt of priests is another grand characteristic of a freethinker. This shows that Cato understood the whole mystery of the Roman " religion as by law established." I beg you, sir, not to overlook these last words, " religion as by law established." I translate *haruspex* into the general word, *priest*. Thus I apply the sentence to our priests in England ; and, when Dr Smallridge sees Dr Atterbury, I wonder how either of them can forbear laughing at the cheat they put upon the people, by making them believe their " religion as by law established."

Cicero, that consummate philosopher and noble patriot, though he was a priest, and consequently more likely to be a knave, gave the greatest proofs of his freethinking. First, he professed the sceptic philosophy, which doubts of every thing. Then, he wrote two treatises ; in the first, he shows the weakness of the stoics' arguments for the being of the Gods : in the latter, he has destroyed the whole revealed religion of the Greeks and Romans ; for why should not theirs be a revealed religion as well as that of Christ ? Cicero likewise tells us, as his own opinion, that they who study philosophy do not believe there

are any Gods: he denies the immortality of the soul, and says, there can be nothing after death.

And because the priests have the impudence to quote Cicero, in their pulpits and pamphlets, against freethinking, I am resolved to disarm them of his authority. You must know, his philosophical works are generally in dialogues, where people are brought in disputing against one another. Now the priests, when they see an argument to prove a God, offered perhaps by a stoic, are such knaves or blockheads, to quote it as if it were Cicero's own: whereas Cicero was so noble a freethinker, that he believed nothing at all of the matter, nor ever shows the least inclination to favour superstition, or the belief of God, and the immortality of the soul; unless what he throws out sometimes to save himself from danger, in his speeches to the Roman mob; whose religion was, however, much more innocent, and less absurd, than that of popery at least: and I could say more—but you understand me.

Seneca was a great freethinker, and had a noble notion of the worship of the Gods, for which our priests would call any man an atheist: he laughs at morning devotions, or worshipping upon sabbath days; he says, God has no need of ministers and servants, because he himself serves mankind. This religious man, like his religious brethren the stoics, denies the immortality of the soul; and says, all that is feigned to be so terrible in hell is but a fable: death puts an end to all our misery, &c. Yet the priests were anciently so fond of Seneca, that they forged a correspondence of letters between him and St Paul.

Solomon himself, whose writings are called "the word of God," was such a freethinker, that if he were now alive, nothing but his building of churches could have kept our priests from calling

him an atheist. He affirms the eternity of the world almost in the same manner with Manilius the heathen philosophical poet, which opinion entirely overthrows the history of the creation by Moses, and all the New Testament: he denies the immortality of the soul, assures us "that men die like beasts," and "that both go to one place."

The prophets of the Old Testament were generally freethinkers. You must understand, that their way of learning to prophecy was by music and drinking.* These prophets wrote against the established religion of the Jews (which those people looked upon as the institution of God himself), as if they believed it was all a cheat: that is to say, with as great liberty against the priests and prophets of Israel, as Dr Tindal did lately against the priests and prophets of our Israel, who has clearly shown them and their religion to be cheats. To prove this, you may read several passages in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Jeremiah, &c. wherein you will find such instances of freethinking, that, if any Englishman had talked so in our days, their opinions would have been registered in Dr Sacheverell's trial, and in the representation of the lower house of convocation, and produced as so many proofs of the prophaneness, blasphemy, and atheism of the nation; there being nothing more prophane, blasphemous, or

* Collins, after making the charge, which has been repeated by all infidels down to Thomas Paine, that the prophets acquired their fervour of spirit by the aid of music and wine, allows, nevertheless, that they were great freethinkers, and "writ with as great liberty against the established religion of the Jews, which the people looked on as the institution of God himself, as if they looked upon it all to be imposture."—*Discourse, p. 153, et sequen.*

atheistical, in those representations, than what these prophets have spoken, whose writings are yet called by our priests, "the word of God." And therefore these prophets are as much atheists as myself, or as any of my freethinking brethren whom I lately named to you.

Josephus was a great freethinker. I wish he had chosen a better subject to write on, than those ignorant, barbarous, ridiculous scoundrels the Jews, whom God (if we may believe the priests) thought fit to choose for his own people. I will give you some instances of his freethinking. He says, Cain travelled through several countries, and kept company with rakes and profligate fellows; he corrupted the simplicities of former times, &c. which plainly supposes men before Adam, and consequently that the priests' history of the creation by Moses, is an imposture. He says, the Israelites passing through the Red Sea, was no more than Alexander's passing at the Pamphilian sea; that as for the appearance of God at Mount Sinai, the reader may believe it as he pleases; that Moses persuaded the Jews, he had God for his guide, just as the Greeks pretended they had their laws from Apollo. These are noble strains of freethinking, which the priests know not how to solve, but by thinking as freely: for one of them says, that Josephus wrote this, to make his work acceptable to the heathens, by striking out every thing that was incredible.

Origen, who was the first Christian that had any learning, has left a noble testimony of his freethinking; for a general council has determined him to be damned; which plainly shows he was a freethinker, and was no saint: for, people were only sainted because of their want of

learning and excess of zeal : so that all the fathers who are called saints by the priests, were worse than atheists.

Minutius Felix seems to be a true modern latitudinarian, freethinking Christian: for he is against altars, churches, public preaching, and public assemblies; and likewise against priests; for, he says, there were several great flourishing empires before there were any orders of priests in the world.

Synesius, who had too much learning and too little zeal for a saint, was for some time a great freethinker; he could not believe the resurrection till he was made a bishop, and then pretended to be convinced by a lying miracle.

To come to our own country! My lord Bacon was a great freethinker, when he tells us, "that whatever has the least relation to religion is particularly liable to suspicion;" by which he seems to suspect all the facts whereon most of the superstitions (that is to say, what the priests call the religions) of the world are grounded. He also prefers atheism before superstition.

Mr Hobbes was a person of great learning, virtue, and freethinking, except in the high church politics.

But archbishop Tillotson is the person whom all English freethinkers own as their head; and his virtue is indisputable for this manifest reason, that Dr Hicke, a priest, calls him an atheist; says, he caused several to turn atheists, and to ridicule the priesthood and religion. These must be allowed to be noble effects of freethinking. This great prelate assures us, that all the duties of the Christian religion, with respect to God, are no other but what natural light prompts men to, except the two sacraments, and praying to God

in the name and mediation of Christ. As a priest and prelate, he was obliged to say something of Christianity; but pray observe, sir, how he brings himself off. He justly affirms, that even these things are of less moment than natural duties; and, because mothers nursing their children is a natural duty, it is of more moment than the two sacraments, or than praying to God in the name, and by the mediation, of Christ. This freethinking archbishop could not allow a miracle sufficient to give credit to a prophet, who taught any thing contrary to our natural notions: by which, it is plain, he rejected at once all the mysteries of Christianity.

I could name one and twenty more great men, who were all freethinkers; but that I fear to be tedious: for it is certain that all men of sense depart from the opinions commonly received; and are consequently more or less men of sense, according as they depart more or less from the opinions commonly received: neither can you name an enemy to freethinking, however he be dignified or distinguished, whether archbishop, bishop, priest, or deacon, who has not been either "a crackbrained enthusiast, a diabolical villain, or a most profound ignorant brute."

Thus, sir, I have endeavoured to execute your commands, and you may print this Letter if you please: but I would have you conceal your name. For my opinion of virtue is, that we ought not to venture doing ourselves harm, by endeavouring to do good.

I am, yours, &c.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE here given the public a brief, but faithful abstract of this most excellent Essay ; wherein I have all along religiously adhered to our author's notions, and generally to his words, without any other addition than that of explaining a few necessary consequences, for the sake of ignorant readers ; for, to those who have the least degree of learning, I own, they will be wholly useless. I hope I have not, in any single instance, misrepresented the thoughts of this admirable writer. If I have happened to mistake through inadvertency, I entreat he will condescend to inform me, and point out the place ; upon which, I will immediately beg pardon both of him and the world. The design of his piece is to recommend freethinking ; and one chief motive is the example of many excellent men who were of that sect. He produces as the principal points of their freethinking, that they denied the being of a God, the torments of hell, the immortality of the soul, the Trinity, incarnation, the history of the creation by Moses, with many other such " fabulous and blasphemous stories," as he judiciously calls them : and he asserts, that whoever denies the most of these, is the completest freethinker, and consequently the wisest and most virtuous man.

The author, sensible of the prejudices of the age, does not directly affirm himself an atheist ; he goes no farther than to pronounce that atheism

is the most perfect degree of freethinking; and leaves the reader to form the conclusion. However, he seems to allow, that a man may be a tolerable freethinker, though he does believe a God; provided he utterly rejects "providence, revelation, the Old and New Testament, future rewards and punishments, the immortality of the soul," and other the like impossible absurdities. Which mark of superabundant caution, sacrificing truth to the superstition of priests, may perhaps be forgiven, but ought not to be imitated by any who would arrive (even in this author's judgment) at the true perfection of freethinking.

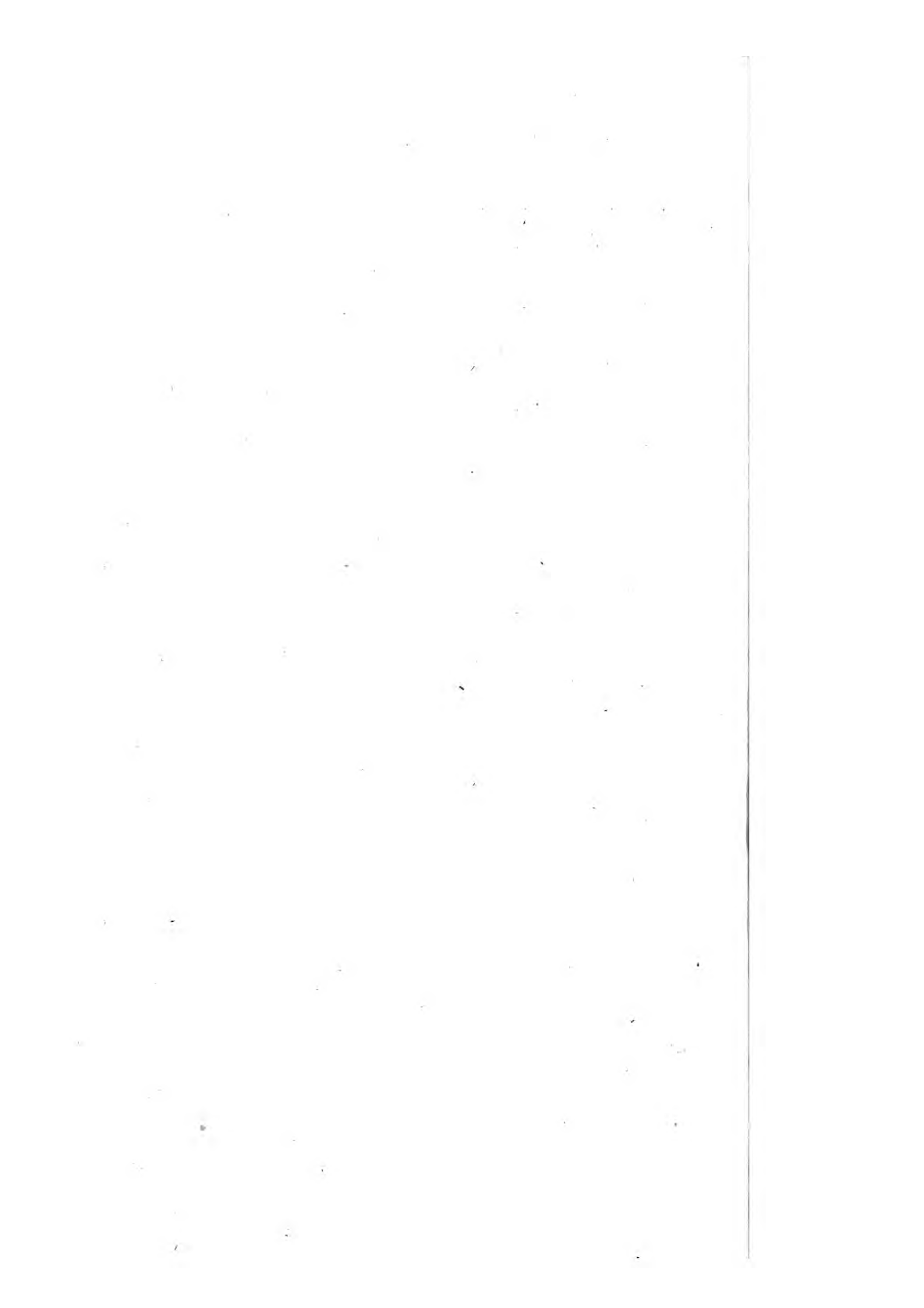
SOME THOUGHTS
ON
FREETHINKING.

WRITTEN IN ENGLAND, BUT LEFT UNFINISHED.

DISCOURSING one day with a prelate of the kingdom of Ireland, who is a person of excellent wit and learning, he offered a notion applicable to the subject we were then upon, which I took to be altogether new and right. He said, that the difference betwixt a madman and one in his wits, in what related to speech, consisted in this; that the former spoke out whatever came into his mind, and just in the confused manner as his imagination presented the ideas: the latter only expressed such thoughts as his judgment directed him to choose, leaving the rest to die away in his memory; and that, if the wisest man would, at any time, utter his thoughts in the crude indigested manner as they come into his head, he would be looked upon as raving mad. And, indeed, when we consider our thoughts, as they are the seeds of words and actions, we cannot but

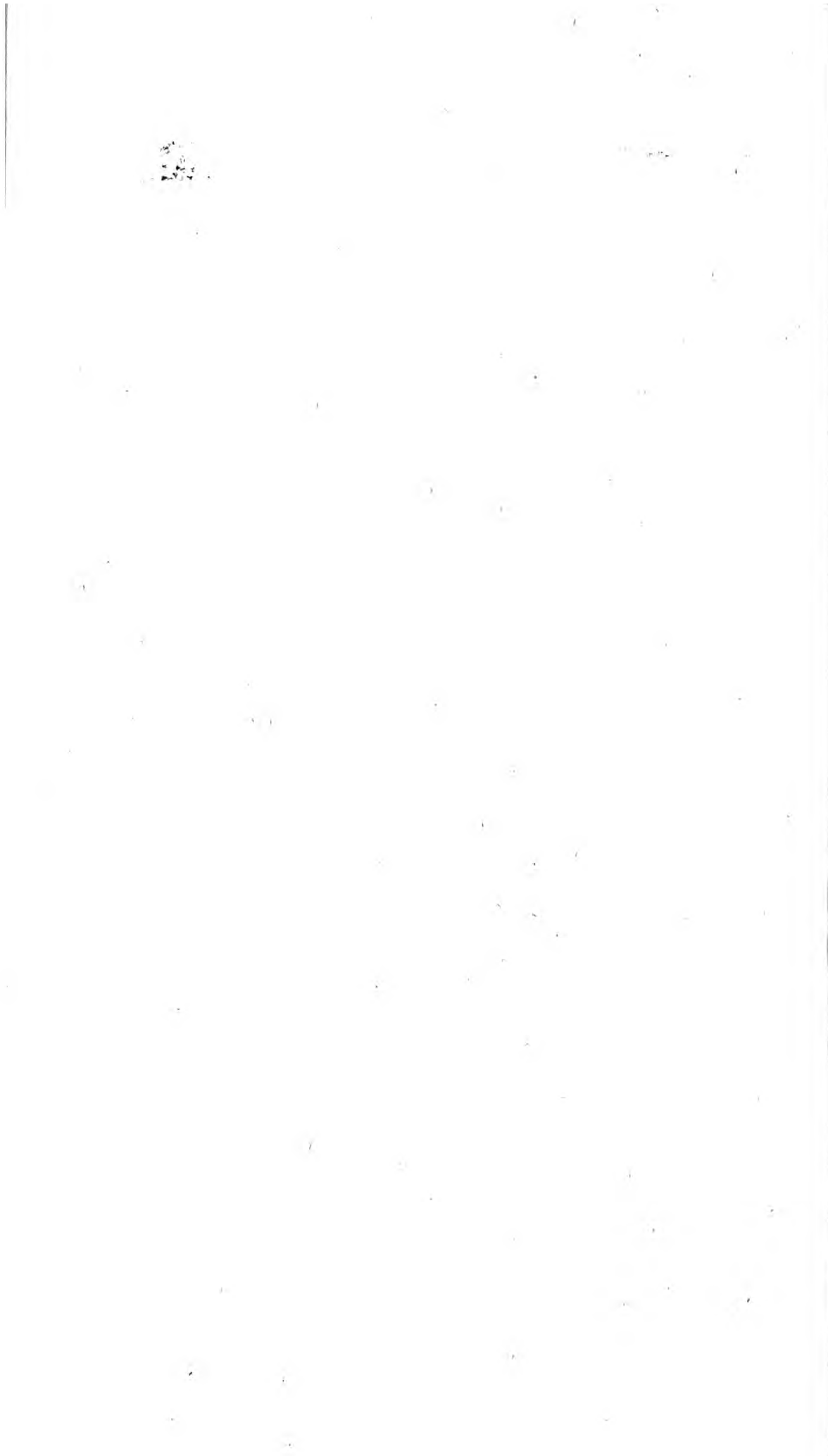
agree that they ought to be kept under the strictest regulation; and that in the great multiplicity of ideas which one's mind is apt to form, there is nothing more difficult than to select those which are most proper for the conduct of life. So that I cannot imagine what is meant by the mighty zeal in some people for asserting the freedom of thinking; because, if such thinkers keep their thoughts within their own breasts, they can be of no consequence, farther than to themselves. If they publish them to the world, they ought to be answerable for the effects their thoughts produce upon others. There are thousands in this kingdom, who, in their thoughts, prefer a republic, or absolute power of a prince, before a limited monarchy; yet, if any of these should publish their opinions, and go about, by writing or discourse, to persuade the people to innovations in government, they would be liable to the severest punishments the law can inflict; and therefore they are usually so wise as to keep their sentiments to themselves. But, with respect to religion, the matter is quite otherwise: and the public, at least here in England, seems to be of opinion with *Tiberius*, that *Deorum injuriæ diis curæ*. They leave it to God Almighty to vindicate the injuries done to himself, who is no doubt sufficiently able, by perpetual miracles, to revenge the affronts of impious men. And, it should seem, that is what princes expect from him, though I cannot readily conceive the grounds they go upon; nor why, since they are God's vicegerents, they do not think themselves at least equally obliged to preserve their master's honour as their own; since this is what they expect from those they depute, and since they never fail to represent the disobedience of their subjects, as offences against

God. It is true, the visible reason of this neglect is obvious enough: the consequences of atheistical opinions, published to the world, are not so immediate, or so sensible, as doctrines of rebellion and sedition, spread in a proper season. However, I cannot but think the same consequences are as natural and probable from the former, though more remote: and whether these have not been in view among our great planters of infidelity in England, I shall hereafter examine.



A LETTER
TO
A YOUNG CLERGYMAN,
LATELY ENTERED INTO
HOLY ORDERS.

1719-20.



A LETTER, &c.

THIS excellent treatise, well worthy of the study of all who take orders, seems to claim precedence, in point of general importance, over those pieces which relate more immediately to church politics. The cynic philosophy of Swift, his detestation of the times in which he lived, and his ideas of the unduly degraded state of the clergy, are strangely contrasted with his sound good sense, extensive knowledge of the world, principles of practical morality, and high feeling, not only of the importance of his order, but of the talents and virtues requisite to its dignity. The Dean's very peculiar vein of humour, which seldom forsook him, even upon the most serious subjects, glances forth from time to time through his graver precepts. The *Essays upon the Fates of Clergymen*, and the *Hatred to the Clergy*, seem a proper sequel to the *Letter*.

A LETTER

TO

A YOUNG CLERGYMAN, &c.

Dublin, Jan. 9, 1719-20.

SIR,

ALTHOUGH it was against my knowledge or advice, that you entered into holy orders, under the present dispositions of mankind toward the church, yet since it is now supposed too late to recede, (at least according to the general practice and opinion,) I cannot forbear offering my thoughts to you upon this new condition of life you are engaged in.

I could heartily wish, that the circumstances of your fortune had enabled you to have continued some years longer in the university, at least till you were ten years standing; to have laid in a competent stock of human learning, and some knowledge in divinity, before you attempted to appear in the world: for I cannot but lament the common course which at least nine in ten of those, who enter into the ministry, are obliged to run. When they have taken a degree, and are conse-

quently grown a burden to their friends, who now think themselves fully discharged, they get into orders as soon as they can, (upon which I shall make no remarks,) first solicit a readership, and if they be very fortunate, arrive in time to a curacy here in town, or else are sent to be assistants in the country, where they probably continue several years, (many of them their whole lives,) with thirty or forty pounds a-year for their support: till some bishop, who happens to be not overstocked with relations, or attached to favourites, or is content to supply his diocese without colonies from England, bestows upon them some inconsiderable benefice, when it is odds they are already encumbered with a numerous family. I should be glad to know, what intervals of life such persons can possibly set apart for the improvement of their minds; or which way they could be furnished with books, the library they brought with them from their college, being usually not the most numerous, or judiciously chosen. If such gentlemen arrive to be great scholars, it must, I think, be either by means supernatural, or by a method altogether out of any road yet known to the learned. But I conceive the fact directly otherwise, and that many of them lose the greatest part of the small pittance they receive at the university.

I take it for granted, that you intend to pursue the beaten track, and are already desirous to be seen in a pulpit: only I hope you will think it proper to pass your quarantine among some of the desolate churches five miles round this town, where you may at least learn to read and to speak, before you venture to expose your parts in a city congregation: not that these are better judges, but because, if a man must needs expose

his folly, it is more safe and discreet to do so before few witnesses, and in a scattered neighbourhood. And you will do well if you can prevail upon some intimate and judicious friend to be your constant hearer, and allow him with the utmost freedom to give you notice of whatever he shall find amiss, either in your voice or gesture; for want of which early warning, many clergymen continue defective, and sometimes ridiculous, to the end of their lives. Neither is it rare to observe among excellent and learned divines, a certain ungracious manner, or an unhappy tone of voice, which they never have been able to shake off.

I should likewise have been glad, if you had applied yourself a little more to the study of the English language, than I fear you have done; the neglect whereof is one of the most general defects among the scholars of this kingdom, who seem not to have the least conception of a style, but run on in a flat kind of phraseology, often mingled with barbarous terms and expressions, peculiar to the nation; neither do I perceive that any person either finds or acknowledges his wants upon this head, or in the least desires to have them supplied. Proper words, in proper places, make the true definition of a style. But this would require too ample a disquisition to be now dwelt on: however, I shall venture to name one or two faults, which are easy to be remedied, with a very small portion of abilities.

The first, is the frequent use of obscure terms, which by the women are called hard words, and, by the better sort of vulgar, fine language; than which I do not know a more universal, inexcusable, and unnecessary mistake, among the clergy of all distinctions, but especially the younger

practitioners. I have been curious enough to take a list of several hundred words in a sermon of a new beginner, which not one of his hearers among a hundred could possibly understand; neither can I easily call to mind any clergyman of my own acquaintance who is wholly exempt from this error, although many of them agree with me in the dislike of the thing. But I am apt to put myself in the place of the vulgar, and think many words difficult or obscure, which the preacher will not allow to be so, because those words are obvious to scholars. I believe the method observed by the famous lord Falkland,* in some of his writings, would not be an ill one for young divines: I was assured by an old person of quality, who knew him well, that when he doubted whether a word was perfectly intelligible or not, he used to consult one of his lady's chambermaids, (not the waiting-woman, because it was possible she might be conversant in romances,) and by her judgment was guided whether to receive or reject it. And if that great person thought such a caution necessary in treatises offered to the learned world, it will be sure at least as proper in sermons, where the meanest hearer is supposed to be concerned, and where very often a lady's chambermaid may be allowed

* Lucius Cary, viscount Falkland, slain at the battle of Newbury, in the great civil war, and now better known by the splendid character drawn by Lord Clarendon than by his own compositions. "A person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so flowing and obliging an humanity and goodness to mankind, that, if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed civil war than that single loss, it must be infamous and execrable to all posterity."—*History of the Rebellion, Book VII.*

to equal half the congregation, both as to quality and understanding. But I know not how it comes to pass, that professors in most arts and sciences are generally the worst qualified to explain their meanings to those, who are not of their tribe: a common farmer shall make you understand in three words, that his foot is out of joint, or his collar-bone broken; wherein a surgeon, after a hundred terms of art, if you are not a scholar, shall leave you to seek. It is frequently the same case in law, physic, and even many of the meaner arts.

And upon this account it is, that among hard words, I number likewise those which are peculiar to divinity as it is a science, because I have observed several clergymen, otherwise little fond of obscure terms, yet in their sermons very liberal of those which they find in ecclesiastical writers, as if it were our duty to understand them: which I am sure it is not. And I defy the greatest divine to produce any law either of God or man, which obliges me to comprehend the meaning of *omniscience, omnipresence, ubiquity, attribute, beatific vision*, with a thousand others so frequent in pulpits, any more than that of *eccentric, idiosyncrasy, entity*, and the like.* I believe I may venture to insist farther, that many terms used in holy writ, particularly by St Paul, might with more discretion be changed into plainer speech, except when they are introduced as part of a quotation.†

* The greater part of these examples of obscure terms are now naturalized, and generally understood. The late Dr Johnson's writings had a great effect in familiarizing the public to words derived from the dead languages.

† In his *Thoughts on Religion*, Swift regrets that points of doc-

I am the more earnest in this matter, because it is a general complaint, and the justest in the world. For, a divine has nothing to say to the wisest congregation of any parish in this kingdom, which he may not express in manner to be understood by the meanest among them. And this assertion must be true, or else God requires from us more than we are able to perform. However, not to contend whether a logician might possibly put a case that would serve for an exception, I will appeal to any man of letters, whether at least nineteen in twenty of those perplexing words, might not be changed into easy ones, such as naturally first occur to ordinary men, and probably did so at first to those very gentlemen, who are so fond of the former.

We are often reprov'd by divines, from the pulpits, on account of our ignorance in things sacred, and perhaps with justice enough: however, it is not very reasonable for them to expect, that common men should understand expressions, which are never made use of in common life. No gentleman thinks it safe or prudent to send a servant with a message, without repeating it more than once, and endeavouring to put it into terms brought down to the capacity of the bearer: yet, after all this care, it is frequent for servants to mistake, and sometimes occasion misunderstandings among friends. Although the common domestics in some gentlemen's families have more opportunities of improving their minds than the ordinary sort of tradesmen.

It is usual for clergymen, who are taxed with

trine have been founded upon the terms of eastern elocution employed by St Paul.

this learned defect, to quote Dr Tillotson, and other famous divines, in their defence, without considering the difference between elaborate discourses upon important occasions, delivered to princes or parliaments, written with a view of being made public, and a plain sermon intended for the middle or lower size of people. Neither do they seem to remember the many alterations, additions, and expungings made by great authors in those treatises, which they prepare for the public. Besides, that excellent prelate above-mentioned, was known to preach after a much more popular manner in the city congregations; and if in those parts of his works he be any where too obscure for the understandings of many, who may be supposed to have been his hearers, it ought to be numbered among his omissions.

The fear of being thought pedants, has been of pernicious consequence to young divines. This has wholly taken many of them off from their severer studies in the university; which they have exchanged for plays, poems, and pamphlets, in order to qualify them for tea-tables and coffee-houses. This they usually call "polite conversation, knowing the world, and reading men instead of books." These accomplishments, when applied to the pulpit, appear by a quaint, terse, florid style, rounded into periods and cadences, commonly without either propriety or meaning. I have listened with my utmost attention for half an hour to an orator of this species, without being able to understand, much less to carry away, one single sentence out of a whole sermon. Others, to show that their studies have not been confined to sciences, or ancient authors, will talk in the style of a gaming ordinary, and White

Friars,* when I suppose the hearers can be little edified by the terms of "*palming, shuffling, biting, bamboozling,*" and the like, if they have not been sometimes conversant among pick-pockets and sharpers. And truly, as they say a man is known by his company, so it should seem that a man's company may be known by his manner of expressing himself, either in public assemblies, or private conversation.

It would be endless to run over the several defects of style among us: I shall therefore say nothing of the mean and paltry (which are usually attended by the fustian) much less of the slovenly or indecent. Two things I will just warn you against: the first is, the frequency of flat unnecessary epithets; and the other is, the folly of using old threadbare phrases, which will often make you go out of your way to find and apply them, are nauseous to rational hearers, and will seldom express your meaning, as well as your own natural words.

Although, as I have already observed, our English tongue is too little cultivated in this kingdom, yet the faults are nine in ten owing to affectation, and not to the want of understanding. When a man's thoughts are clear, the properest words will generally offer themselves first, and his own judgment will direct him in what order to place them, so as they may be best understood. Where men err against this method, it is usually on purpose, and to show their knowledge of the world. In short, that simplicity, without which no human performance can arrive to any great perfec-

* A place of asylum, as already noticed, frequented by sharpers.

tion, is no where more eminently useful than in this.

I have been considering that part of oratory, which relates to the moving of the passions; this I observe is in esteem and practice among some church divines, as well as among all the preachers and hearers of the fanatic or enthusiastic strain. I will here deliver to you (perhaps with more freedom than prudence) my opinion upon the point.

The two great orators of Greece and Rome, Demosthenes and Cicero, though each of them a leader (or, as the Greeks called it, a demagogue) in a popular state, yet seem to differ in their practice upon this branch of their art: the former, who had to deal with a people of much more politeness, learning, and wit, laid the greatest weight of his oratory upon the strength of his arguments, offered to their understanding and reason: whereas Tully considered the dispositions of a sincere, more ignorant, and less mercurial nation, by dwelling almost entirely on the pathetic part.

But the principal thing to be remembered is, that the constant design of both these orators, in all their speeches, was, to drive some one particular point; either the condemnation or acquittal of an accused person, a persuasive to war, the enforcing of a law, and the like: which was determined upon the spot, according as the orators on either side prevailed. And here it was often found of absolute necessity to inflame or cool the passions of the audience; especially at Rome, where Tully spoke, and with whose writings young divines (I mean those among them who read old authors) are more conversant than with those of Demosthenes; who by many de-

grees excelled the other, at least as an orator; But I do not see how this talent of moving the passions can be of any great use toward directing Christian men in the conduct of their lives; at least in these northern climates, where I am confident the strongest eloquence of that kind will leave few impressions upon any of our spirits deep enough to last till the next morning, or rather, to the next meal.*

But what has chiefly put me out of conceit with this moving manner of preaching, is the frequent disappointment it meets with. I know a gentleman who made it a rule in reading, to skip over all sentences where he spied a note of admiration at the end. I believe those preachers who abound in *epiphonemas*,† if they look about them, would find one part of their congregation out of countenance, and the other asleep; except perhaps an old female beggar or two in the aisles, who (if they be sincere) may probably groan at the sound.

Nor is it a wonder, that this expedient should so often miscarry, which requires so much art and genius to arrive at any perfection in it; as every man will find, much sooner than learn, by consulting Cicero himself.

I therefore entreat you to make use of this faculty (if you ever be so unfortunate as to think you have it) as seldom, and with as much caution as you can, else I may probably have occasion to say of you, as a great person said of another upon

* We have already observed, that the Dean, in his own practice, rarely or never attempted to get the feelings of his audience on the side of the preacher.

† *Epiphonema* is a figure in rhetoric, signifying a sententious kind of exclamation.

this very subject. A lady asked him, coming out of church, whether it were not a very moving discourse? "Yes," says he, "I was extremely sorry, for the man is my friend."

If in company you offer something for a jest, and nobody seconds you in your own laughter, or seems to relish what you said, you may condemn their taste, if you please, and appeal to better judgments; but, in the mean time, it must be agreed, you make a very indifferent figure: and it is, at least, equally ridiculous to be disappointed in endeavouring to make other folks grieve, as to make them laugh.

A plain convincing reason may possibly operate upon the mind, both of a learned and ignorant hearer, as long as they live, and will edify a thousand times more than the art of wetting the handkerchiefs of a whole congregation, if you were sure to attain it.

If your arguments be strong, in God's name offer them in as moving a manner as the nature of the subject will properly admit, wherein reason and good advice will be your safest guides; but beware of letting the pathetic part swallow up the rational: for I suppose philosophers have long agreed, that passion should never prevail over reason.

As I take it, the two principal branches of preaching are, first, to tell the people what is their duty, and then to convince them that it is so. The topics for both these, we know, are brought from scripture and reason. Upon the former, I wish it were often practised to instruct the hearers in the limits, extent, and compass of every duty; which requires a good deal of skill and judgment: the other branch is, I think, not so difficult. But what I would offer upon both, is this, that it

seems to be in the power of a reasonable clergyman, if he will be at the pains, to make the most ignorant man comprehend what is his duty, and to convince him by arguments drawn to the level of his understanding, that he ought to perform it.

But I must remember that my design in this paper, was not so much to instruct you in your business, either as a clergyman or a preacher, as to warn you against some mistakes, which are obvious to the generality of mankind, as well as to me; and we, who are hearers, may be allowed to have some opportunities in the quality of being standers-by. Only, perhaps, I may now again transgress, by desiring you to express the heads of your divisions in as few and clear words as you possibly can; otherwise I, and many thousand others, will never be able to retain them, and consequently to carry away a syllable of the sermon.

I shall now mention a particular, wherein your whole body will be certainly against me, and the laity, almost to a man, on my side. However it came about, I cannot get over the prejudice, of taking some little offence at the clergy for perpetually reading their sermons; perhaps my frequent hearing of foreigners, who never made use of notes, may have added to my disgust. And I cannot but think, that whatever is read differs as much from what is repeated without book as a copy does from an original. At the same time I am highly sensible, what an extreme difficulty it would be upon you to alter this method; and that in such a case, your sermons would be much less valuable than they are, for want of time to improve and correct them. I would therefore gladly come to a compromise with you in this matter. I

knew a clergyman of some distinction, who appeared to deliver his sermon without looking into his notes, which when I complimented him upon, he assured me he could not repeat six lines; but his method was to write the whole sermon in a large plain hand, with all the forms of margin, paragraph, marked page, and the like; then on Sunday morning he took care to run it over five or six times, which he could do in an hour; and when he delivered it, by pretending to turn his face from one side to the other, he would (in his own expression) pick up the lines, and cheat his people, by making them believe he had it all by heart. He farther added, that whenever he happened by neglect to omit any of these circumstances, the vogue of the parish was, "our doctor gave us but an indifferent sermon to-day." Now among us, many clergymen act so directly contrary to this method, that from a habit of saving time and paper, which they acquired at the University, they write in so diminutive a manner, with such frequent blots and interlineations, that they are hardly able to go on without perpetual hesitations, or extemporary expletives: and I desire to know what can be more inexcusable, than to see a divine and a scholar at a loss in reading his own compositions, which it is supposed he has been preparing with much pains and thought for the instruction of his people. The want of a little more care in this article is the cause of much ungraceful behaviour. You will observe some clergymen with their heads held down from the beginning to the end, within an inch of the cushion, to read what is hardly legible: which, beside the untoward manner, hinders them from making the best advantage of their voice: others again have a trick of popping up and down every moment

from their paper to the audience, like an idle school-boy on a repetition-day.*

Let me intreat you, therefore, to add one half-crown a year to the article of paper; to transcribe your sermons in as large and plain a manner as you can; and either make no interlineations, or change the whole leaf; for we, your hearers, would rather you should be less correct, than perpetually stammering, which I take to be one of the worst solecisms in rhetoric. And, lastly, read your sermon once or twice a day, for a few days before you preach it: to which you will probably answer some years hence, "that it was but just finished when the last bell rang to church:" and I shall readily believe, but not excuse you.

I cannot forbear warning you, in the most earnest manner, against endeavouring at wit in your sermons, because, by the strictest computation, it is very near a million to one that you have none; and because too many of your calling have consequently made themselves everlastingly ridiculous by attempting it. I remember several young men in this town, who could never leave the pulpit under half a dozen conceits; and this faculty adhered to those gentlemen a longer or

* The custom of reading sermons, now universal in the Church of England, seems originally to have arisen in opposition to the practice of Dissenters, many of whom affected to trust to inspiration in their *extempore* harangues. But there is certainly a wide difference between the two extremes, of writing down every word that is to be spoken, and of making no previous preparation, division, or arrangement of discourse. He who ties himself down to his written sheets of paper, necessarily loses every advantage with which the flowing current of his own ideas always supplies the *extempore* speaker. And it seems conclusive against this frigid custom, that, in any other mode of public speaking, it would be held absurd and childish.

shorter time, exactly in proportion to their several degrees of dulness: accordingly, I am told, that some of them retain it to this day. I heartily wish the brood were at an end.

Before you enter into the common unsufferable cant of taking all occasions to disparage the heathen philosophers, I hope you will differ from some of your brethren, by first enquiring what those philosophers can say for themselves.* The system of morality to be gathered out of the writings or sayings of those ancient sages, falls undoubtedly very short of that delivered in the gospel, and wants, besides, the divine sanction which our Saviour gave his. Whatever is farther related by the evangelists, contains chiefly matters of fact, and consequently of faith; such as the birth of Christ, his being the Messiah, his miracles, his death, resurrection, and ascension: none of which can properly come under the appellation of human wisdom, being intended only to make us wise unto salvation. And therefore in this point nothing can be justly laid to the charge of the philosophers, farther than that they were ignorant of certain facts which happened long after their death. But I am deceived, if a better comment could be any where collected upon the moral part of the gospel, than from the writings of those excellent men; even that divine precept

* It was the fate of the present Editor to hear a preacher, after labouring to convince his congregation of the absolute certainty of death, demand, in further illustration, where were now the ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome, of whom he numbered a reasonable bead-roll, beginning with Socrates? and, having triumphantly replied to his own question, that they were all dead, he was pleased to subjoin, "and I fear, my brethren, finally damn'd."

of loving our enemies, is at large insisted on by Plato, who puts it, as I remember, into the mouth of Socrates. And as to the reproach of heathenism, I doubt they had less of it than the corrupted Jews, in whose time they lived. For it is a gross piece of ignorance among us, to conceive, that in those polite and learned ages, even persons of any tolerable education, much less the wisest philosophers, did acknowledge or worship any more than one almighty power, under several denominations, to whom they allowed all those attributes we ascribe to the divinity; and, as I take it, human comprehension reaches no farther; neither did our Saviour think it necessary to explain to us the nature of God, because, as I suppose, it would be impossible, without bestowing on us other faculties than we possess at present. But the true misery of the heathen world appears to be, what I before mentioned, the want of a divine sanction, without which the dictates of the philosophers failed in the point of authority; and consequently the bulk of mankind lay indeed under a great load of ignorance, even in the article of morality; but the philosophers themselves did not. Take the matter in this light, and it will afford field enough for a divine to enlarge on, by showing the advantages which the Christian world has over the heathen, and the absolute necessity of divine revelation, to make the knowledge of the true God, and the practice of virtue, more universal in the world.

I am not ignorant how much I differ in this opinion from some ancient fathers in the church, who, arguing against the heathens, made it a principal topic to decry their philosophy as much as they could: which, I hope, is not altogether our present case. Besides, it is to be considered,

that those fathers lived in the decline of literature; and in my judgment (who should be unwilling to give the least offence) appear to be rather most excellent holy persons, than of transcendent genius and learning. Their genuine writings (for many of them have extremely suffered by spurious editions) are of admirable use for confirming the truth of ancient doctrines and discipline, by showing the state and practice of the primitive church. But among such of them as have fallen in my way, I do not remember any, whose manner of arguing or exhorting I could heartily recommend to the imitation of a young divine, when he is to speak from the pulpit. Perhaps I judge too hastily, there being several of them in whose writings I have made very little progress, and in others none at all. For I perused only such as were recommended to me, at a time when I had more leisure, and a better disposition to read, than have since fallen to my share.

To return then to the heathen philosophers: I hope you will not only give them quarter, but make their works a considerable part of your study. To these I will venture to add the principal orators and historians, and perhaps a few of the poets; by the reading of which, you will soon discover your mind and thoughts to be enlarged, your imagination extended and refined, your judgment directed, your admiration lessened, and your fortitude increased; all which advantages must needs be of excellent use to a divine, whose duty it is to preach and practise the contempt of human things.

I would say something concerning quotations, wherein I think you cannot be too sparing, except from scripture, and the primitive writers of

the church. As to the former, when you offer a text as a proof of an illustration, we your hearers expect to be fairly used, and sometimes think we have reason to complain, especially of you younger divines; which makes us fear that some of you conceive you have no more to do than to turn over a concordance, and there having found the principal word, introduce as much of the verse as will serve your turn, though in reality it makes nothing for you. I do not altogether disapprove the manner of interweaving texts of scripture through the style of your sermon, wherein, however, I have sometimes observed great instances of indiscretion and impropriety, against which I therefore venture to give you a caution.

As to quotations from ancient fathers, I think they are best brought in to confirm some opinion controverted by those who differ from us: in other cases we give you full power to adopt the sentence for your own, rather than tell us, "as St Austin excellently observes." But to mention modern writers by name, or use the phrase of "a late excellent prelate of our church," and the like, is altogether intolerable, and, for what reason I know not, makes every rational hearer ashamed. Of no better a stamp is your "heathen philosopher," and "famous poet," and "Roman historian," at least in common congregations, who will rather believe you on your own word, than on that of Plato or Homer.

I have lived to see Greek and Latin almost entirely driven out of the pulpit, for which I am heartily glad. The frequent use of the latter was certainly a remnant of popery, which never admitted scripture in the vulgar language; and I wonder that practice was never accordingly objected to us by the fanatics.

The mention of quotations puts me in mind of commonplace books, which have been long in use by industrious young divines, and, I hear, do still continue so : I know they are very beneficial to lawyers and physicians, because they are collections of facts or cases, whereupon a great part of their several faculties depend : of these I have seen several, but never yet any written by a clergyman ; only from what I am informed, they generally are extracts of theological and moral sentences, drawn from ecclesiastical and other authors, reduced under proper heads, usually begun, and perhaps finished, while the collectors were young in the church, as being intended for materials, or nurseries to stock future sermons. You will observe the wise editors of ancient authors, when they meet a sentence worthy of being distinguished, take special care to have the first word printed in capital letters, that you may not overlook it : such, for example, as the INCONSTANCY OF FORTUNE, the GOODNESS OF PEACE, the EXCELLENCY OF WISDOM, the CERTAINTY OF DEATH ; that PROSPERITY makes men INSOLENT, and ADVERSITY HUMBLE ; and the like eternal truths, which every ploughman knows well enough, though he never heard of Aristotle or Plato. If theological commonplace books be no better filled, I think they had better be laid aside ; and I could wish, that men of tolerable intellectuals would rather trust their own natural reason, improved by a general conversation with books, to enlarge on a point which they are supposed already to understand. If a rational man reads an excellent author with just application, he shall find himself extremely improved, and, perhaps, insensibly led to imitate that author's perfections, although in a little time he should not remem-

ber one word in the book, nor even the subject it handled : for, books give the same turn to our thoughts and way of reasoning, that good and ill company does to our behaviour and conversation ; without either loading our memories, or making us even sensible of the change.* And particularly I have observed in preaching, that no men succeed better, than those who trust entirely to the stock or fund of their own reason, advanced indeed, but not overlaid, by commerce with books. Whoever only reads in order to transcribe wise and shining remarks, without entering into the genius and spirit of the author, as it is probable he will make no very judicious extract, so he will be apt to trust to that collection in all his compositions, and be misled out of the regular way of thinking, in order to introduce those materials, which he has been at the pains to gather : and the product of all this, will be found a manifest incoherent piece of patchwork.

Some gentlemen, abounding in their university erudition, are apt to fill their sermons with philosophical terms, and notions of the metaphysical or abstracted kind ; which generally have one advantage, to be equally understood by the wise, the vulgar, and the preacher himself. I have been better entertained, and more informed, by a few pages in the Pilgrim's Progress, than by a long discourse upon the will and the intellect, and simple or complex ideas. Others again are fond of dilating on matter and motion, talk of the fortuitous concourse of atoms, of theories,

* This invaluable observation ought to be treasured by those, who plead the shortness of their memory as a cause of discontinuing their studies.

and phenomena ; directly against the advice of St Paul, who yet appears to have been conversant enough in those kinds of studies.

I do not find that you are any where directed in the canons or articles, to attempt explaining the mysteries of the Christian religion. And indeed, since Providence intended there should be mysteries, I do not see how it can be agreeable to piety, orthodoxy, or good sense, to go about such a work. For, to me, there seems to be a manifest dilemma in the case ; if you explain them, they are mysteries no longer ; if you fail, you have laboured to no purpose. What I should think most reasonable and safe for you to do upon this occasion, is, upon solemn days, to deliver the doctrine as the church holds it ; and confirm it by scripture.* For my part, having considered the matter impartially, I can see no great reason, which those gentlemen you call the freethinkers, can have for their clamour against religious mysteries ; since it is plain they were not invented by the clergy, to whom they bring no profit, nor acquire any honour. For every clergyman is ready, either to tell us the utmost he knows, or to confess that he does not understand them : neither is it strange, that there should be mysteries in divinity, as well as in the commonest operations of nature.

And here I am at a loss what to say upon the frequent custom of preaching against atheism, deism, freethinking, and the like, as young divines are particularly fond of doing, especially when they exercise their talent in churches frequent-

* See, in illustration of Swift's opinion, his own excellent Sermon on the Trinity.

ed by persons of quality; which, as it is but an ill compliment to the audience, so I am under some doubt whether it answers the end.

Because, persons under those imputations are generally no great frequenters of churches, and so the congregation is but little edified for the sake of three or four fools, who are past grace: neither do I think it any part of prudence to perplex the minds of well-disposed people with doubts, which probably would never have otherwise come into their heads. But I am of opinion, and dare be positive in it, that not one in a hundred of those who pretend to be freethinkers, are really so in their hearts. For there is one observation, which I never knew to fail, and I desire you will examine it in the course of your life, that no gentleman of a liberal education, and regular in his morals, did ever profess himself a freethinker: where then are these kind of people to be found? among the worst part of the soldiery, made up of pages, younger brothers of obscure families, and others of desperate fortunes; or else among idle town fops, and now and then a drunken 'squire of the country. Therefore nothing can be plainer, than that ignorance and vice are two ingredients absolutely necessary in the composition of those you generally call freethinkers, who, in propriety of speech, are no thinkers at all. And since I am in the way of it, pray consider one thing farther: as young as you are, you cannot but have already observed, what a violent run there is among too many weak people against university education: be firmly assured, that the whole cry is made up by those, who were either never sent to a college, or, through their irregularities and stupidity, never made the least improvement while they were

there. I have above forty of the latter sort now in my eye ; several of them in this town, whose learning, manners, temperance, probity, good-nature, and politics, are all of a piece : others of them in the country, oppressing their tenants, tyrannizing over the neighbourhood, cheating the vicar, talking nonsense, and getting drunk at the sessions. It is from such seminaries as these, that the world is provided with the several tribes and denominations of freethinkers ; who, in my judgment, are not to be reformed by arguments offered to prove the truth of the Christian religion, because reasoning will never make a man correct an ill opinion, which by reasoning he never acquired : for, in the course of things, men always grow vicious before they become unbelievers ; but if you would once convince the town or country profligate, by topics drawn from the view of their own quiet, reputation, health, and advantage, their infidelity would soon drop off : this, I confess, is no easy task, because it is, almost in a literal sense, to fight with beasts. Now, to make it clear, that we are to look for no other original of this infidelity, whereof divines so much complain, it is allowed on all hands, that the people of England are more corrupt in their morals, than any other nation at this day under the sun : and this corruption is manifestly owing to other causes, both numerous and obvious, much more than to the publication of irreligious books, which indeed are but the consequence of the former. For all the writers against Christianity, since the revolution, have been of the lowest rank among men in regard to literature, wit, and good sense, and upon that account wholly unqualified to propagate heresies, unless among a people already abandoned.

In an age, where every thing disliked by those who think with the majority, is called disaffection, it may perhaps be ill interpreted, when I venture to tell you, that this universal depravation of manners is owing to the perpetual bandying of factions among us for thirty years past, when, without weighing the motives of justice, law, conscience, or honour, every man adjusts his principles to those of the party he has chosen, and among whom he may best find his own account ; but by reason of our frequent vicissitudes, men who were impatient of being out of play, have been forced to recant, or at least to reconcile their former tenets with every new system of administration. Add to this, that the old fundamental custom of annual parliaments being wholly laid aside, and elections growing chargeable, since gentlemen found that their country seats brought them in less than a seat in the house, the voters, that is to say, the bulk of the common people, have been universally seduced into bribery, perjury, drunkenness, malice, and slander.

Not to be farther tedious, or rather invidious, these are a few, among other causes, which have contributed to the ruin of our morals, and consequently to the contempt of religion : for, imagine to yourself, if you please, a landed youth, whom his mother would never suffer to look into a book for fear of spoiling his eyes, got into parliament, and observing all enemies to the clergy heard with the utmost applause, what notions he must imbibe, how readily he will join in the cry, what an esteem he will conceive of him, and what a contempt he must entertain, not only for his vicar at home, but for the whole order.

I therefore again conclude, that the trade of

infidelity has been taken up only for an expedient to keep in countenance that universal corruption of morals, which many other causes first contributed to introduce and to cultivate. And thus Mr Hobbes's saying upon reason may be much more properly applied to religion: that, if religion will be against a man, a man will be against religion. Though after all, I have heard a profligate offer much stronger arguments against paying his debts, than ever he was known to do against Christianity; indeed the reason was, because in that juncture he happened to be closer pressed by the bailiff than the parson.

Ignorance may perhaps be the mother of superstition, but experience has not proved it to be so of devotion; for Christianity always made the most easy and quickest progress in civilized countries. I mention this, because it is affirmed, that the clergy are in most credit where ignorance prevails, (and surely this kingdom would be called the paradise of clergymen, if that opinion were true,) for which they instance England in the times of popery. But, whoever knows any thing of three or four centuries before the reformation, will find the little learning then stirring was more equally divided between the English clergy and laity, than it is at present. There were several famous lawyers in that period, whose writings are still in the highest repute, and some historians and poets, who were not of the church. Whereas now a-days our education is so corrupted, that you will hardly find a young person of quality with the least tincture of knowledge, at the same time that many of the clergy were never more learned, or so scurvily treated. Here among us at least, a man of letters, out of the three professions, is almost a prodigy. And those few, who have preserved

any rudiments of learning, are, (except perhaps one or two smatterers,) the clergy's friend to a man; and I dare appeal to any clergyman in this kingdom, whether the greatest dunce in the parish, be not always the most proud, wicked, fraudulent, and intractable of his flock.

I think the clergy have almost given over perplexing themselves and their hearers with abstruse points of predestination, election, and the like; at least, it is time they should; and therefore I shall not trouble you farther upon this head.

I have now said all I could think convenient with relation to your conduct in the pulpit: your behaviour in the world is another scene, upon which I shall readily offer you my thoughts, if you appear to desire them from me by your approbation of what I have here written; if not, I have already troubled you too much.

I am, Sir,

Your affectionate friend and servant.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

FATES OF CLERGYMEN.

THERE is no talent so useful toward rising in the world, or which puts men more out of the reach of fortune, than that quality generally possessed by the dullest sort of men, and in common speech called discretion; a species of lower prudence, by the assistance of which, people of the meanest intellectuals, without any other qualification, pass through the world in great tranquillity, and with universal good treatment, neither giving nor taking offence. Courts are seldom unprovided of persons under this character, on whom, if they happen to be of great quality, most employments, even the greatest, naturally fall, when competitors will not agree; and in such promotions nobody rejoices or grieves. The truth of this I could prove by several instances within my own memory; for I say nothing of present times.

And indeed, as regularity and forms are of great use in carrying on the business of the world, so it is very convenient, that persons endued with this kind of discretion, should have that share which is proper to their talents, in the conduct of affairs, but by no means meddle in matters which require genius, learning, strong-comprehension, quickness

of conception, magnanimity, generosity, sagacity, or any other superior gift of human minds. Because this sort of discretion is usually attended with a strong desire of money, and few scruples about the way of obtaining it; with servile flattery and submission; with a want of all public spirit or principle; with a perpetual wrong judgment, when the owners come into power and high place, how to dispose of favour and preferment; having no measures for merit and virtue in others, but those very steps by which themselves ascended; nor the least intention of doing good or hurt to the public, farther than either one or t'other is likely to be subservient to their own security or interest. Thus being void of all friendship and enmity, they never complain or find fault with the times, and indeed never have reason to do so.

Men of eminent parts and abilities, as well as virtues, do sometimes rise in the court, sometimes in the law, and sometimes even in the church. Such were the lord Bacon, the earl of Strafford, archbishop Laud in the reign of king Charles I. and others in our own times, whom I shall not name; but these, and many more, under different princes, and in different kingdoms, were disgraced, or banished, or suffered death, merely in envy to their virtues and superior genius, which emboldened them in great exigencies and distresses of state (wanting a reasonable infusion of this aldermanly discretion,) to attempt the service of their prince and country, out of the common forms.

This evil fortune, which generally attends extraordinary men in the management of great affairs, has been imputed to divers causes that need not be here set down, when so obvious a one occurs,

if what a certain writer observes be true, that when a great genius appears in the world, the dunces are all in confederacy against him. And if this be his fate when he employs his talents wholly in his closet, without interfering with any man's ambition or avarice, what must he expect, when he ventures out to seek for preferment in a court, but universal opposition when he is mounting the ladder, and every hand ready to turn him off when he is at the top? and in this point, fortune generally acts directly contrary to nature; for in nature we find, that bodies full of life and spirits mount easily, and are hard to fall, whereas heavy bodies are hard to rise, and come down with greater velocity in proportion to their weight; but we find fortune every day acting just the reverse of this.

This talent of discretion, as I have described it in its several adjuncts and circumstances, is no where so serviceable as to the clergy, to whose preferment nothing is so fatal as the character of wit, politeness in reading or manners, or that kind of behaviour, which we contract by having too much conversation with persons of high station and eminency; these qualifications being reckoned by the vulgar of all ranks, to be marks of levity, which is the last crime the world will pardon in a clergyman; to this I may add a free manner of speaking in mixt company, and too frequent an appearance in places of much resort, which are equally noxious to spiritual promotion.

I have known indeed a few exceptions to some parts of these observations. I have seen some of the dullest men alive aiming at wit, and others, with as little pretensions, affecting politeness in manners and discourse; but never being able

to persuade the world of their guilt, they grew into considerable stations, upon the firm assurance, which all people had of their discretion, because they were of a size too low to deceive the world to their own disadvantage. But this I confess is a trial too dangerous often to engage in.

There is a known story of a clergyman, who was recommended for a preferment by some great men at court to an archbishop.* His grace said, "he had heard that the clergyman used to play at whist and swobbers; that as to playing now and then a sober game at whist for pastime, it might be pardoned, but he could not digest those wicked swobbers;" and it was with some pains that my Lord Somers could undeceive him. I ask, by what talents we may suppose that great prelate ascended so high, or what sort of qualifications he would expect in those whom he took into his patronage, or would probably recommend to court for the government of distant churches?

Two clergymen, in my memory, stood candidates for a small freeschool in Yorkshire, where a gentleman of quality and interest in the country, who happened to have a better understanding than his neighbours, procured the place for him who was the better scholar, and more gentlemanly person of the two, very much to the regret of all the parish: the other being disappointed, came up to London, where he became the greatest pattern of this lower discretion that I have

* Archbishop Tenison, who, by all contemporary accounts, was a very dull man. There was a bitter sarcasm upon him usually ascribed to Swift, "That he was as hot and heavy as a taylor's goose."

known, and possessed it with as heavy intellectuals: which, together with the coldness of his temper, and gravity of his deportment, carried him safe through many difficulties, and he lived and died in a great station; while his competitor is too obscure for fame to tell us what became of him.

This species of discretion, which I so much celebrate, and do most heartily recommend, has one advantage not yet mentioned: it will carry a man safe through all the malice and variety of parties, so far, that whatever faction happens to be uppermost, his claim is usually allowed for a share of what is going. And the thing seems to me highly reasonable: for in all great changes, the prevailing side is usually so tempestuous, that it wants the ballast of those whom the world calls moderate men, and I call men of discretion; whom people in power may, with little ceremony, load as heavy as they please, drive them through the hardest and deepest roads without danger of foundering, or breaking their backs, and will be sure to find them neither resty nor vicious.

I will here give the reader a short history of two clergymen in England, the characters of each, and the progress of their fortunes in the world; by which the force of worldly discretion, and the bad consequences from the want of that virtue, will strongly appear.

Corusodes, an Oxford student, and a farmer's son, was never absent from prayers or lecture, nor once out of his college after Tom had tolled. He spent every day ten hours in his closet, in reading his courses, dozing, clipping papers, or darning his stockings; which last he performed to admiration. He could be soberly drunk at

the expense of others, with college ale, and at those seasons was always most devout. He wore the same gown five years without dragling or tearing. He never once looked into a play-book or a poem. He read Virgil and Ramus in the same cadence, but with a very different taste. He never understood a jest, or had the least conception of wit.

For one saying he stands in renown to this day. Being with some other students over a pot of ale, one of the company said so many pleasant things, that the rest were much diverted, only Corusodes was silent and unmoved. When they parted, he called this merry companion aside, and said, "Sir, I perceive by your often speaking, and our friends laughing, that you spoke many jests; and you could not but observe my silence: but, sir, this is my humour: I never make a jest myself, nor ever laugh at another man's."

Corusodes thus endowed got into holy orders; having, by the most extreme parsimony, saved thirty-four pounds out of a very beggarly fellowship, he went up to London, where his sister was waitingwoman to a lady, and so good a solicitor, that by her means he was admitted to read prayers in the family twice a-day, at ten shillings a month. He had now acquired a low, obsequious, awkward bow, and a talent of gross flattery both in and out of season; he would shake the butler by the hand; he taught the page his catechism, and was sometimes admitted to dine at the steward's table. In short, he got the good word of the whole family, and was recommended by my lady for chaplain to some other noble houses, by which his revenue (besides vales) amounted to about thirty pounds a year:

his sister procured him a scarf from my lord, who had a small design of gallantry upon her; and by his lordship's solicitation he got a lectureship in town of sixty pounds a year; where he preached constantly in person, in a grave manner, with an audible voice, a style ecclesiastic, and the matter (such as it was) well suited to the intellectuals of his hearers. Some time after, a country living fell in my lord's disposal; and his lordship, who had now some encouragement given him of success in his amour, bestowed the living on Corusodes, who still kept his lectureship and residence in town; where he was a constant attendant at all meetings relating to charity, without ever contributing farther than his frequent pious exhortations. If any woman of better fashion in the parish happened to be absent from church, they were sure of a visit from him in a day or two, to chide and to dine with them.

He had a select number of poor constantly attending at the street door of his lodging, for whom he was a common solicitor to his former patroness, dropping in his own half-crown among the collections, and taking it out when he disposed of the money. At a person of quality's house, he would never sit down, till he was thrice bid, and then upon the corner of the most distant chair. His whole demeanour was formal and starch, which adhered so close, that he could never shake it off in his highest promotion.

His lord was now in high employment at court, and attended by him with the most abject assiduity; and his sister being gone off with child to a private lodging, my lord continued his graces to Corusodes, got him to be a chaplain in ordinary, and in due time a parish in town, and a dignity in the church.

He paid his curates punctually, at the lowest salary, and partly out of the communion money ; but gave them good advice in abundance. He married a citizen's widow, who taught him to put out small sums at ten *per cent.* and brought him acquainted with jobbers in Change-alley. By her dexterity he sold the clerkship of his parish, when it became vacant.

He kept a miserable house, but the whole blame was laid wholly upon madam ; for the good doctor was always at his books, or visiting the sick, or doing other offices of charity and piety in his parish.

He treated all his inferiors of the clergy with a most sanctified pride ; was rigorously and universally censorious upon all his brethren of the gown, on their first appearance in the world, or while they continued meanly preferred ; but gave large allowance to the laity of high rank, or great riches, using neither eyes nor ears for their faults : he was never sensible of the least corruption in courts, parliaments, or ministries, but made the most favourable constructions of all public proceedings ; and power, in whatever hands, or whatever party, was always secure of his most charitable opinion. He had many wholesome maxims ready to excuse all miscarriages of state : men are but men ; *erunt vitia donec homines* ; and *quod supra nos, nil ad nos* ; with several others of equal weight.

It would lengthen my paper beyond measure to trace out the whole system of his conduct ; his dreadful apprehensions of popery ; his great moderation toward dissenters of all denominations ; with hearty wishes, that by yielding somewhat on both sides, there might be a general union among protestants ; his short, inoffensive sermons in his

turns at court, and the matter exactly suited to the present juncture of prevailing opinions; the arts he used to obtain a mitre, by writing against episcopacy; and the proofs he gave of his loyalty, by palliating or defending the murder of a martyred prince.

Endowed with all these accomplishments, we leave him in the full career of success, mounting fast toward the top of the ladder ecclesiastical, which he has a fair probability to reach; without the merit of one single virtue, moderately stocked with the least valuable parts of erudition, utterly devoid of all taste, judgment, or genius; and in his grandeur, naturally choosing to haul up others after him, whose accomplishments most resemble his own, except his beloved sons, nephews, or other kindred, be in competition; or lastly, except his inclinations be diverted by those, who have power to mortify, or farther advance him.

Eugenio set out from the same university, and about the same time with Corusodes; he had the reputation of an arch lad at school, and was unfortunately possessed with a talent for poetry; on which account he received many chiding letters from his father, and grave advice from his tutor. He did not neglect his college learning, but his chief study was the authors of antiquity, with a perfect knowledge in the Greek and Roman tongues. He could never procure himself to be chosen fellow; for it was objected against him, that he had written verses, and particularly some, wherein he glanced at a certain reverend doctor famous for dulness; that he had been seen bowing to ladies, as he met them in the street; and it was proved, that once he had been found dancing in a private family, with half a dozen of both sexes.

He was the younger son to a gentleman of good birth, but small estate; and his father dying, he was driven to London to seek his fortune: he got into orders, and became reader in a parish church at twenty pounds a year; was carried by an Oxford friend to Will's coffeehouse, frequented in those days by men of wit, wherein some time he had the bad luck to be distinguished. His scanty salary compelled him to run deep in debt for a new gown and cassock, and now and then forced him to write some paper of wit or humour, or preach a sermon for ten shillings, to supply his necessities. He was a thousand times recommended by his poetical friends to great persons, as a young man of excellent parts, who deserved encouragement, and received a thousand promises; but his modesty, and a generous spirit, which disdained the slavery of continual application and attendance, always disappointed him, making room for vigilant dunces, who were sure to be never out of sight.

He had an excellent faculty in preaching, if he were not sometimes a little too refined, and apt to trust too much to his own way of thinking and reasoning.

When, upon the vacancy of preferment, he was hardly drawn to attend upon some promising lord, he received the usual answer, "That he came too late, for it had been given to another the very day before." And he had only this comfort left, that every body said, "it was a thousand pities something could not be done for poor Mr Eugenio."

The remainder of his story will be dispatched in a few words: wearied with weak hopes, and weaker pursuits, he accepted a curacy in Derbyshire, of thirty pounds a year, and when he was five and forty, had the great felicity to be pre-

ferred by a friend of his father's to a vicarage worth annually sixty pounds, in the most desert parts of Lincolnshire; where, his spirit quite sunk with those reflections that solitude and disappointments bring, he married a farmer's widow, and is still alive, utterly undistinguished and forgotten; only some of the neighbours have accidentally heard, that he had been a notable man in his youth.



CONCERNING THAT
UNIVERSAL HATRED
WHICH PREVAILS
AGAINST THE CLERGY.

May 24, 1736.

I HAVE been long considering and conjecturing, what could be the causes of that great disgust, of late, against the clergy of both kingdoms, beyond what was ever known, till that monster and tyrant, Henry VIII., who took away from them, against law, reason, and justice, at least two-thirds of their legal possessions; and whose successors (except queen Mary) went on with their rapine, till the accession of king James I. That detestable tyrant Henry VIII., although he abolished the pope's power in England, as universal bishop, yet what he did in that article, however just it were in itself, was the mere effect of his irregular appetite, to divorce himself from a wife he was weary of, for a younger and more beautiful woman, whom he afterward beheaded. But, at the same time, he was an entire defender of all the popish doctrines, even those which were the most

absurd. And while he put the people to death for denying him to be head of the church, he burned every offender against the doctrines of the Roman faith; and cut off the head of sir Thomas More, a person of the greatest virtue this kingdom ever produced, for not directly owning him to be head of the church. Among all the princes who ever reigned in the world, there was never so infernal a beast as Henry VIII., in every vice of the most odious kind, without any one appearance of virtue: but cruelty, lust, rapine, and atheism, were his peculiar talents. He rejected the power of the pope for no other reason than to give his full swing to commit sacrilege, in which no tyrant, since Christianity became national, did ever equal him by many degrees. The abbeyes, endowed with lands by the mistaken notion of well-disposed men, were indeed too numerous, and hurtful to the kingdom; and therefore the legislature might, after the Reformation, have justly applied them to some pious or public uses.

In a very few centuries after Christianity became national in most parts of Europe, although the church of Rome had already introduced many corruptions in religion; yet the piety of early Christians, as well as the new converts, was so great, and particularly princes, as well as noblemen and other wealthy persons, that they built many religious houses for those who were inclined to live in a recluse or solitary manner, endowing those monasteries with land. It is true, we read of monks some ages before, who dwelt in caves and cells, in desert places. But when public edifices were erected and endowed, they began gradually to degenerate into idleness, ignorance, avarice, ambition, and luxury, after the usual fate of all human institutions. The popes, who had

already aggrandised themselves, laid hold of the opportunity to subject all religious houses, with their priors and abbots, to their peculiar authority; whereby these religious orders became of an interest directly different from the rest of mankind, and wholly at the pope's devotion. I need say no more on this article, so generally known and so frequently treated, or of the frequent endeavours of some other princes, as well as our own, to check the growth, and wealth, and power of the regulars.

In later times, this mistaken piety, of erecting and endowing abbeys, began to decrease. And therefore, when some new-invented sect of monks and friars began to start up, not being able to procure grants of land, they got leave from the pope to appropriate the tithes and glebes of certain parishes, as contiguous or near as they could find, obliging themselves to send out some of their body to take care of the people's souls; and if some of those parishes were at too great a distance from the abbey, the monks appointed to attend them were paid for the cure, either a small stipend of a determined sum, or sometimes a third part, or what are now called the vicarial tithes.

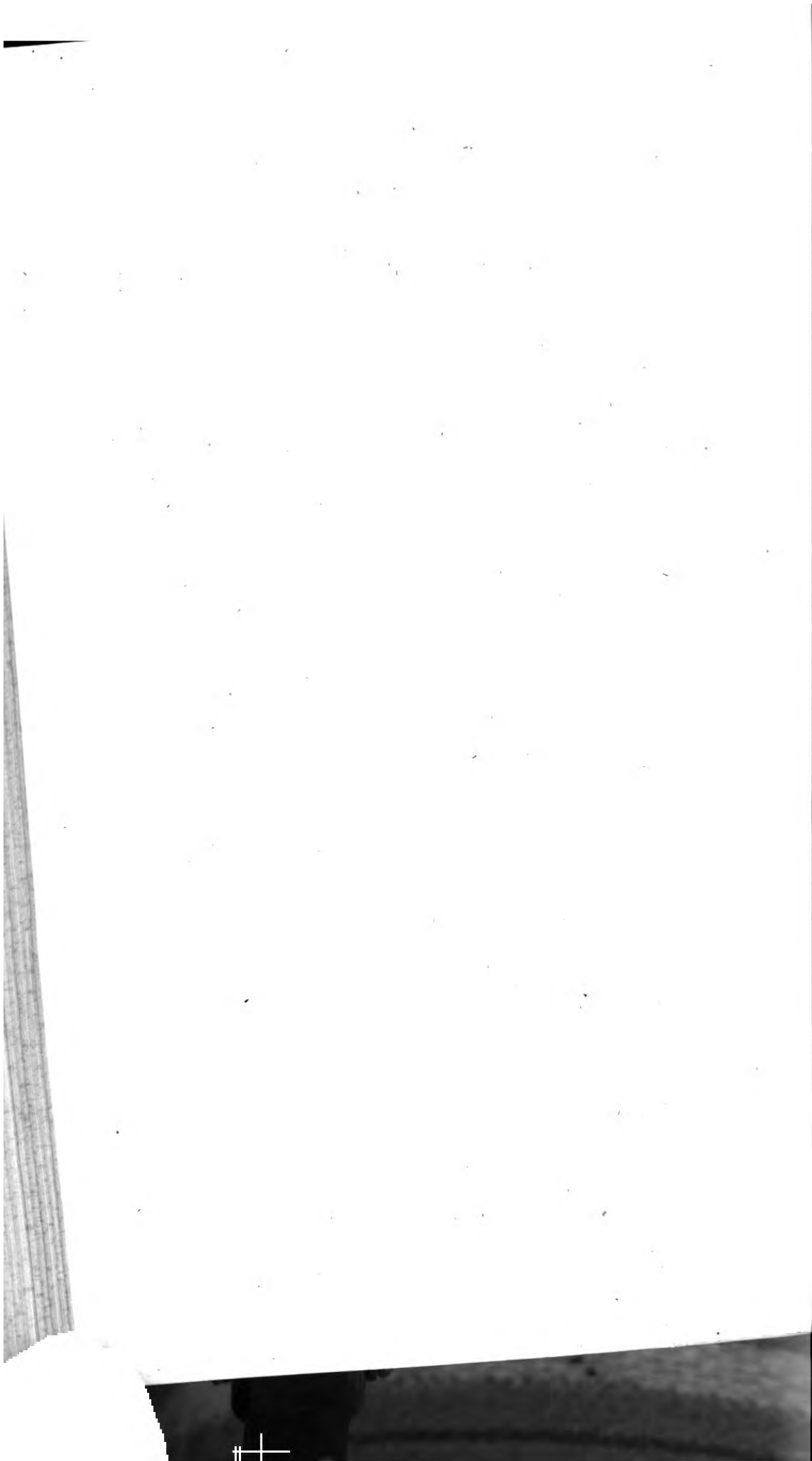
As to the church-lands, it hath been the opinion of many writers, that, in England, they amounted to a third part of the whole kingdom. And, therefore, if that wicked prince above-mentioned, when he had cast off the pope's power, had introduced some reformation in religion, he could not have been blamed for taking away the abbey-lands, by authority of parliament. But, when he continued the most cruel persecution of all those who differed in the least article of the popish religion, which was then the national and established

faith, his seizing on those lands, and applying them to profane uses, was absolute sacrilege, in the strongest sense of the word; having been bequeathed by princes and pious men to sacred uses.

In the reign of this prince, the church and court of Rome had arrived to such a height of corruption, in doctrine and discipline, as gave great offence to many wise, learned, and pious men through most parts of Europe; and several countries agreed to make some reformation in religion. But, although a proper and just reformation were allowed to be necessary, even to preserve Christianity itself, yet the passions and vices of men had mingled themselves so far, as to pervert and confound all the good endeavours of those who intended well: and thus the reformation, in every country where it was attempted, was carried on in the most impious and scandalous manner that can possibly be conceived. To which unhappy proceedings we owe all the just reproaches that Roman catholics have cast upon us ever since. For when the northern kingdoms and states grew weary of the pope's tyranny, and when their preachers, beginning with the scandalous abuses of indulgences, and proceeding farther to examine several points of faith, had credit enough with their princes, who were in some fear lest such a change might affect the peace of their countries, because their bishops had great influence on the people by their wealth and power; these politic teachers had a ready answer to this purpose: "Sir, your majesty need not be in any pain or apprehension: take away the lands, and sink the authority of the bishops: bestow those lands on your courtiers, on your nobles, and your great officers in your army; and then you will

be secure of the people." This advice was exactly followed. And in the protestant monarchies abroad, little more than the shadow of episcopacy is left; but, in the republics, it is wholly extinct.

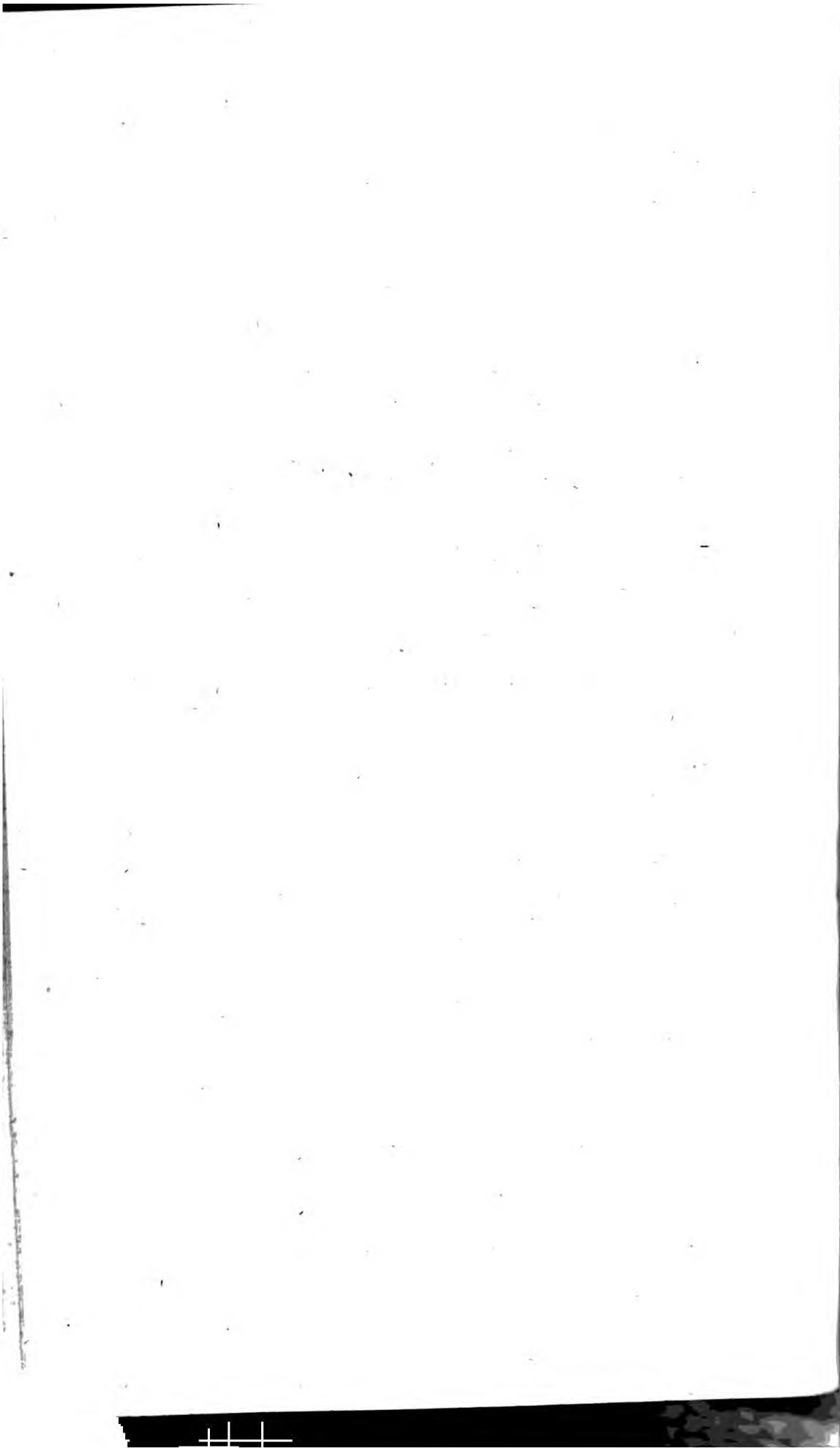
In England, the reformation was brought in after a somewhat different manner, but upon the same principle of robbing the church. However, Henry VIII., with great dexterity, discovered an invention to gratify his insatiable thirst for blood, on both religions. * * * * *



TRACTS

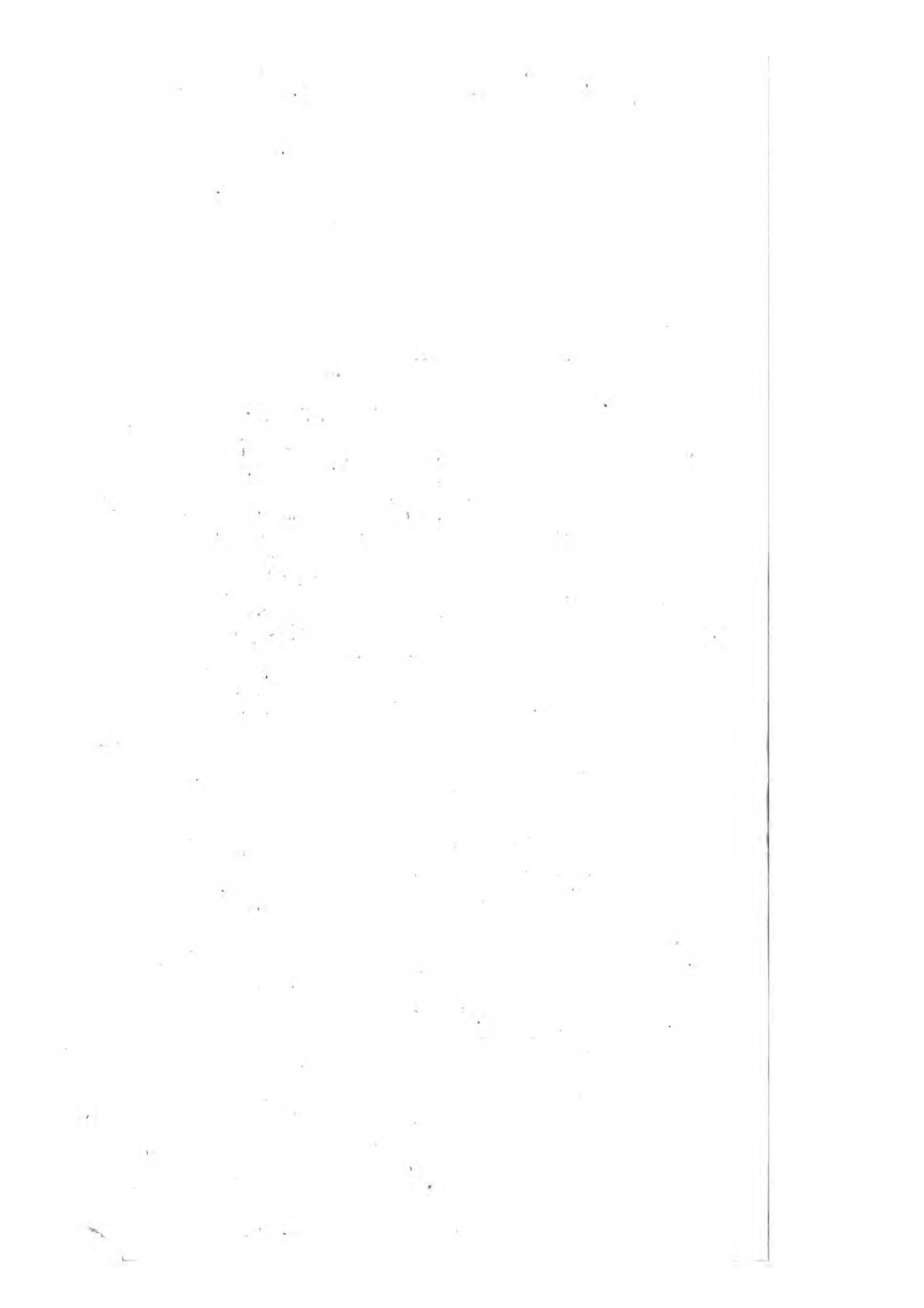
IN SUPPORT OF

THE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.



THE SENTIMENTS, &c.

It was in consequence of publishing this and the succeeding tract that the first breach, or rather coolness, arose between Swift and his original friends of the Whig party. He had already stated to Lord Somers, about 1707-8, that, although he felt himself inclined to be a Whig in politics, he was, as to clerical rights, a high churchman, and did not conceive how it was possible that one who wore the habit of a clergyman should be otherwise. Swift, therefore, stated the impolicy of the connivance or encouragement given by the Whigs to those authors who attacked the clerical order, and urged the high probability that their conduct would unite the church as one man to oppose them. In the following tract, he attempts to recommend to the public an union between a high and rigid regard for the church establishment on the one hand, and the principles of civil liberty on the other. He failed, however, in his appeal to the nation, as well as in his private advice to the Whig Ministers. It was, indeed, impossible it should be otherwise. High Church and Low Church formed, at this period, the discriminating banners under which Whigs and Tories respectively arranged themselves, and under which ensigns alone each expected to meet his enemies or his friends. All attempt at reconciling High Church politics to Whiggish principles soon appeared to be desperate; and the interests of his order prevailed with Swift over his favour for the political principles of Somers and Godolphin.



THE SENTIMENTS
OF A
CHURCH OF ENGLAND MAN,
WITH RESPECT TO
RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1708.

WHOEVER has examined the conduct and proceedings of both parties, for some years past, whether in or out of power, cannot well conceive it possible to go far toward the extremes of either, without offering some violence to his integrity, or understanding. A wise and a good man may indeed be sometimes induced to comply with a number, whose opinion he generally approves, though it be perhaps against his own. But this liberty should be made use of upon very few occasions, and those of small importance, and then only with a view of bringing over his own side, another time, to something of greater and more public moment. But to sacrifice the innocency of a friend, the good of our country, or our own conscience, to the humour, or passion, or interest of a party, plainly shows, that either our heads or our hearts are not as they should be : yet this very practice is the fun-

damental law of each faction among us, as may be obvious to any, who will impartially, and without engagement, be at the pains to examine their actions, which however is not so easy a task: for it seems a principle in human nature, to incline one way more than another, even in matters where we are wholly unconcerned. And it is a common observation, that in reading a history of facts done a thousand years ago, or standing by at play among those, who are perfect strangers to us, we are apt to find our hopes and wishes engaged on a sudden in favour of one side more than another. No wonder then that we are all so ready to interest ourselves in the course of public affairs, where the most inconsiderable have some real share, and, by the wonderful importance which every man is of to himself, a very great imaginary one.

And indeed, when the two parties, that divide the whole commonwealth, come once to a rupture, without any hopes left of forming a third, with better principles, to balance the others, it seems every man's duty to choose one of the two sides, though he cannot entirely approve of either; and all pretences to neutrality, are justly exploded by both, being too stale and obvious, only intending the safety and ease of a few individuals, while the public is embroiled. This was the opinion and practice of the latter Cato, whom I esteem to have been the wisest and best of all the Romans. But before things proceed to open violence, the truest service a private man may hope to do his country, is, by unbiassing his mind as much as possible, and then endeavouring to moderate between the rival powers; which must needs be owned a fair proceeding with the world, because it is, of all others, the least consistent with the common de-

sign of making a fortune, by the merit of an opinion.

I have gone as far as I am able in qualifying myself to be such a moderator : I believe I am no bigot in religion, and I am sure I am none in government. I converse in full freedom with many considerable men of both parties ; and if not in equal number, it is purely accidental and personal, as happening to be near the court, and to have made acquaintance there, more under one ministry than another. Then, I am not under the necessity of declaring myself by the prospect of an employment. And lastly, if all this be not sufficient, I industriously conceal my name, which wholly exempts me from any hopes and fears in delivering my opinion.

In consequence of this free use of my reason, I cannot possibly think so well or so ill of either party, as they would endeavour to persuade the world of each other, and of themselves. For instance ; I do not charge it upon the body of the whigs or the tories, that their several principles lead them to introduce presbytery, and the religion of the church of Rome ; or a commonwealth, and arbitrary power. For why should any party be accused of a principle, which they solemnly disown and protest against ? But, to this they have a mutual answer ready : they both assure us, that their adversaries are not to be believed ; that they disown their principles out of fear, which are manifest enough, when we examine their practices. To prove this, they will produce instances, on one side, either of avowed presbyterians, or persons of libertine and atheistical tenets ; and on the other, of professed papists, or such as are openly in the interest of the abdicated family. Now it is very natural for all subordinate sects and denominations

in a state, to side with some general party, and to choose that, which they find to agree with themselves in some general principle. Thus, at the restoration, the presbyterians, anabaptists, independents, and other sects, did all, with very good reason, unite and solder up their several schemes, to join against the church; who, without regard to their distinctions, treated them all as equal adversaries. Thus, our present dissenters do very naturally close in with the whigs, who profess moderation, declare they abhor all thoughts of persecution, and think it hard that those, who differ only in a few ceremonies and speculations, should be denied the privilege and profit of serving their country, in the highest employments of state. Thus, the atheist, libertines, despisers of religion and revelation in general, that is to say, all those who usually pass under the name of freethinkers, do properly join with the same body; because they likewise preach up moderation, and are not so over-nice to distinguish between an unlimited liberty of conscience, and an unlimited freedom of opinion. Then, on the other side, the professed firmness of the tories for episcopacy, as an apostolical institution: their aversion to those sects, who lie under the reproach of having once destroyed their constitution, and who, they imagine, by too indiscreet a zeal for reformation, have defaced the primitive model of the church; next, their veneration for monarchical government in the common course of succession, and their hatred to republican schemes: these, I say, are principles which not only the non-juring zealots profess, but even papists themselves fall readily in with. And every extreme here mentioned, flings a general scandal upon the whole body it pretends to adhere to.

But surely no man whatsoever, ought, in justice

or good manners, to be charged with principles he actually disowns, unless his practices do openly, and without the least room for doubt, contradict his profession ; not upon small surmises, or because he has the misfortune to have ill men sometimes agree with him in a few general sentiments. However, though the extremes of whig and tory seem, with little justice, to have drawn religion into their controversies, wherein they have small concern, yet they both have borrowed one leading principle from the abuse of it : which is to have built their several systems of political faith, not upon inquiries after truth, but upon opposition to each other, upon injurious appellations, charging their adversaries with horrid opinions, and then reproaching them for the want of charity ; *et neuter falso.*

In order to remove these prejudices, I have thought nothing could be more effectual, than to describe the sentiments of a church of England man, with respect to religion and government. This I shall endeavour to do in such a manner, as may not be liable to the least objection from either party, and which I am confident would be assented to by great numbers in both, if they were not misled to those mutual misrepresentations, by such motives, as they would be ashamed to own.


I shall begin with religion.

And here, though it makes an odd sound, yet it is necessary to say, that whoever professes himself a member of the church of England, ought to believe a God, and his providence, together with revealed religion, and the divinity of Christ. For beside those many thousands, who (to speak in the phrase of divines) do practically deny all this by the immorality of their lives, there is no small number, who in their conversation and writings,

directly, or by consequence, endeavour to overthrow it; yet all these place themselves in the list of the national church, though at the same time (as it is highly reasonable) they are great sticklers for liberty of conscience.

To enter upon particulars : a church of England man has a true veneration for the scheme established among us of ecclesiastic government ; and though he will not determine whether episcopacy be of divine right, he is sure it is most agreeable to primitive institution, fittest of all others for preserving order and purity, and under its present regulations best calculated for our civil state: he should therefore think the abolishment of that order among us, would prove a mighty scandal and corruption to our faith, and manifestly dangerous to our monarchy ; nay, he would defend it by arms against all the powers on earth, except our own legislature ; in which case he would submit, as to a general calamity, a dearth, or a pestilence.

As to rites and ceremonies, and forms of prayer, he allows there might be some useful alterations, and more, which in the prospect of uniting Christians might be very supportable, as things declared in their own nature indifferent ; to which he therefore would readily comply, if the clergy, or (though this be not so fair a method) if the legislature should direct : yet, at the same time, he cannot altogether blame the former, for their unwillingness to consent to any alteration ; which, beside the trouble, and perhaps disgrace, would certainly never produce the good effects intended by it. The only condition, that could make it prudent and just for the clergy to comply in altering the ceremonial, or any other indifferent part, would be a firm resolution in the legislature to interpose, by some strict and effectual laws, to prevent the ri-



sing and spreading of new sects, how plausible soever, for the future ; else there must never be an end : and it would be to act like a man, who should pull down and change the ornaments of his house, in compliance to every one, who was disposed to find fault as he passed by ; which, beside the perpetual trouble and expense, would very much damage, and perhaps in time destroy the building. Sects in a state, seem only tolerated with any reason, because they are already spread ; and because it would not be agreeable with so mild a government, or so pure a religion as ours, to use violent methods against great numbers of mistaken people, while they do not manifestly endanger the constitution of either. But the greatest advocates for general liberty of conscience will allow, that they ought to be checked in their beginnings, if they will allow them to be an evil at all ; or, which is the same thing, if they will only grant, it were better for the peace of the state, that there should be none. But while the clergy consider the natural temper of mankind in general, or of our own country in particular, what assurances can they have, that any compliances they shall make, will remove the evil of dissension, while the liberty still continues of professing whatever new opinion we please ? Or how can it be imagined, that the body of dissenting teachers, who must be all undone by such a revolution, will not cast about for some new objections to withhold their flocks, and draw in fresh proselytes, by some farther innovations or refinements ?

Upon these reasons, he is for tolerating such different forms in religious worship as are already admitted, but by no means for leaving it in the power of those, who are tolerated, to advance

their own models, upon the ruin of what is already established ; which it is natural for all sects to desire, and which they cannot be justified by any consistent principles if they do not endeavour ; and yet, which they cannot succeed in, without the utmost danger to the public peace.

To prevent these inconveniences, he thinks it highly just, that all rewards of trust, profit, or dignity, which the state leaves in the disposal of the administration, should be given only to those, whose principles direct them to preserve the constitution in all its parts. In the late affair of occasional conformity, the general argument of those who were against it, was, not to deny it an evil in itself, but that the remedy proposed was violent, untimely, and improper ; which is the bishop of Salisbury's opinion in the speech he made and published against the bill : but however just their fears or complaints might have been upon that score, he thinks it a little too gross and precipitate to employ their writers already in arguments for repealing the sacramental test, upon no wiser maxim, than that no man should, on the account of conscience, be deprived the liberty of serving his country ; a topic which may be equally applied to admit Papists, Atheists, Mahometans, Heathens, and Jews. If the church wants members of its own to employ in the service of the public, or be so unhappily contrived, as to exclude from its communion such persons, who are likeliest to have great abilities, it is time it should be altered, and reduced into some more perfect, or at least more popular form : but in the mean while, it is not altogether improbable, that when those, who dislike the constitution, are so very zealous in their offers for the service of their country, they are

not wholly unmindful of their party, or of themselves.

The Dutch, whose practice is so often quoted to prove and celebrate the great advantages of a general liberty of conscience, have yet a national religion professed by all who bear office among them: but why should they be a precedent for us either in religion or government? our country differs from theirs, as well in situation, soil, and productions of nature, as in the genius and complexion of inhabitants. They are a commonwealth founded on a sudden, by a desperate attempt in a desperate condition, not formed or digested into a regular system by mature thought and reason, but huddled up under the pressure of sudden exigencies; calculated for no long duration, and hitherto subsisting by accident, in the midst of contending powers, who cannot yet agree about sharing it among them. These difficulties do indeed preserve them from any great corruptions, which their crazy constitution would extremely subject them to in a long peace. That confluence of people, in a persecuting age, to a place of refuge nearest at hand, put them upon the necessity of trade, to which they wisely gave all ease and encouragement: and if we could think fit to imitate them in this last particular, there would need no more to invite foreigners among us; who seem to think no farther than how to secure their property and conscience, without projecting any share in that government which gives them protection, or calling it persecution, if it be denied them. But, I speak it for the honour of our administration, although our sects are not so numerous as those in Holland, which I presume is not our fault, and I hope is not our misfortune, we much excel them, and all Christendom besides, in our indulgence to tender con-

sciences.* One single compliance with the national form of receiving the sacrament, is all we require to qualify any sectary among us for the greatest employments in the state, after which he is at liberty to rejoin his own assemblies for the rest of his life. Besides, I will suppose any of the numerous sects in Holland to have so far prevailed, as to have raised a civil war, destroyed their government and religion, and put their administrators to death; after which, I will suppose the people to have recovered all again, and to have settled on their old foundation. Then I would put a query, whether that sect, which was the unhappy instrument of all this confusion, could reasonably expect to be entrusted for the future with the greatest employments, or indeed to be hardly tolerated among them?

To go on with the sentiments of a church of England man: he does not see how that mighty passion for the church, which some men pretend, can well consist with those indignities, and that contempt, they bestow on the persons of the clergy.† It is a strange mark whereby to distinguish high church men, that they are such, who imagine the clergy can never be too low. He thinks the maxim these gentlemen are so fond of, that they are for an humble clergy, is a very good one: and so is he, and for a humble laity too, since humility is a virtue, that perhaps equally befits, and adorns, every station of life.

* When this was written, there was no law against occasional conformity.

† "I observed very well with what insolence and haughtiness some lords of the high church party treated not only their own chaplains, but all other clergy whatsoever, and thought this was sufficiently recompensed by their professions of zeal to the church." Vol. iii. p. 241.

But then, if the scribblers on the other side freely speak the sentiments of their party, a divine of the church of England cannot look for much better quarter thence. You shall observe nothing more frequent in their weekly papers, than a way of affecting to confound the terms of clergy and high church, of applying both indifferently, and then loading the latter, with all the calumny they can invent. They will tell you, they honour a clergyman; but talk at the same time, as if there were not three in the kingdom, who could fall in with their definition.* After the like manner they insult the universities, as poisoned fountains, and corrupters of youth.

Now it seems clear to me, that the whigs might easily have procured, and maintained a majority among the clergy, and perhaps in the universities, if they had not too much encouraged, or connived at, this intemperance of speech and virulence of pen, in the worst and most prostitute of their party; among whom there has been, for some years past, such a perpetual clamour against the ambition, the implacable temper, and the covetousness of the priesthood; such a cant of high church, and persecution, and being priest-ridden, so many reproaches about narrow principles, or terms of communion; then such scandalous reflections on the universities, for infecting the youth of the nation with arbitrary and jacobite principles, that it was natural for those, who had the care of religion and education, to apprehend some general design of altering the consti-

* "I had likewise observed how the whig lords took a direct contrary measure, treated the persons of particular clergymen with great courtesy, but shewed much ill-will and contempt for the order in general."—Vol. iii. p. 241.

tution of both. And all this was the more extraordinary, because it could not easily be forgot, that whatever opposition was made to the usurpations of king James, proceeded altogether from the church of England, and chiefly from the clergy, and one of the universities. For, if it were of any use to recall matters of fact, what is more notorious, than that prince's applying himself first to the church of England? and upon their refusal to fall in with his measures, making the like advances to the dissenters of all kinds, who readily and almost universally complied with him, affecting, in their numerous addresses and pamphlets, the style of our brethren the Roman catholics; whose interests they put on the same foot with their own: and some of Cromwell's officers took posts in the army raised against the prince of Orange.* These proceedings of theirs they can only extenuate, by urging the provocations they had met from the church in king Charles's reign; which, though perhaps excusable upon the score of human infirmity, are not, by any means, a plea of merit, equal to the constancy and sufferings of the bishops and clergy, or of the head and fellows of Magdalen college, that furnished the prince of Orange's declaration with such powerful arguments, to justify and promote the revolution.

Therefore a church of England man abhors the humour of the age, in delighting to fling scandals upon the clergy in general; which, beside the disgrace to the reformation, and to religion itself, cast an ignominy upon the kingdom, that it does

* De Foe's History of Addresses contains some humbling instances of the applauses with which the sectaries hailed their old enemy James II., when they saw him engaged in hostility with the established church.

not deserve. We have no better materials to compound the priesthood of, than the mass of mankind, which, corrupted as it is, those who receive orders, must have some vices to leave behind them when they enter into the church; and if a few do still adhere, it is no wonder, but rather a great one, that they are no worse. Therefore he cannot think ambition, or love of power, more justly laid to their charge, than to other men's; because that would be to make religion itself, or at least the best constitution of church-government, answerable for the errors and depravity of human nature.

Within these last two hundred years, all sorts of temporal power have been wrested from the clergy, and much of their ecclesiastic, the reason or justice of which proceeding I shall not examine; but that the remedies were a little too violent, with respect to their possessions, the legislature has lately confessed, by the remission of their first fruits. Neither do the common libellers deny this, who, in their invectives, only tax the church with an insatiable desire of power and wealth, (equally common to all bodies of men, as well as individuals) but thank God, that the laws have deprived them of both. However, it is worth observing the justice of parties; the sects among us are apt to complain, and think it hard usage to be reproached now after fifty years, for overturning the state, for the murder of a king, and the indignity of a usurpation; yet these very men, and their partisans, are continually reproaching the clergy, and laying to their charge, the pride, the avarice, the luxury, the ignorance, and superstition of popish times, for a thousand years past.

He thinks it a scandal to government, that such

an unlimited liberty should be allowed, of publishing books against those doctrines in religion, wherein all Christians have agreed; much more, to connive at such tracts as reject all revelation, and, by their consequences, often deny the very being of a God. Surely it is not a sufficient atonement for the writers, that they profess much loyalty to the present government, and sprinkle up and down some arguments in favour of the dissenters; that they dispute, as strenuously as they can, for liberty of conscience, and inveigh largely against all ecclesiastics under the name of high church; and, in short, under the shelter of some popular principles in politics and religion, undermine the foundations of all piety and virtue.

As he does not reckon every schism, of that damnable nature which some would represent, so he is very far from closing with the new opinion of those, who would make it no crime at all; and argue at a wild rate, that God Almighty is delighted with the variety of faith and worship, as he is with the varieties of nature. To such absurdities are men carried by the affectation of freethinking, and removing the prejudices of education; under which head, they have for some time begun to list morality and religion. It is certain that before the rebellion in 1642, though the number of puritans (as they were then called) were as great as it is with us, and though they affected to follow pastors of that denomination, yet those pastors had episcopal ordination, possessed preferments in the church, and were sometimes promoted to bishoprics themselves.* But a

* In the reign of Elizabeth, and even in that of James, the puritans were not, properly speaking, dissenters, but, on the con-

breach in the general form of worship was, in those days, reckoned so dangerous and sinful in itself, and so offensive to Roman catholics at home and abroad, that it was too unpopular to be attempted; neither, I believe, was the expedient then found out, of maintaining separate pastors out of private purses.

When a schism is once spread in a nation, there grows at length a dispute, which are the schismatics. Without entering on the arguments used by both sides among us, to fix the guilt on each other, it is certain, that in the sense of the law, the schism lies on that side which opposes itself to the religion of the state. I leave it among the divines to dilate upon the danger of schism, as a spiritual evil; but I would consider it only as a temporal one. And I think it clear, that any great separation from the established worship, though to a new one that is more pure and perfect, may be an occasion of endangering the public peace; because it will compose a body always in reserve, prepared to follow any discontented heads, upon the plausible pretexts of advancing true religion, and opposing error, superstition, or idolatry. For this reason Plato lays it down as a maxim, that men ought to worship the gods according to the laws of the country; and he introduces Socrates, in his last discourse, utterly disowning the crime laid to his charge, of teaching new divinities, or methods of worship. Thus, the poor Hugonots of France, were engaged in a civil war, by the specious pretences of some, who under the guise of religion, sacrificed so many thou-

trary, formed a sort of low church party in the national establishment. Archbishop Abbot himself has been considered as a puritan.

sand lives to their own ambition and revenge. Thus was the whole body of puritans in England drawn to be instruments, or abettors of all manner of villany, by the artifices of a few men, whose designs from the first, were levelled to destroy the constitution both of religion and government. And thus, even in Holland itself, where it is pretended that the variety of sects live so amicably together, and in such perfect obedience to the magistrate, it is notorious how a turbulent party, joining with the Arminians, did, in the memory of our fathers, attempt to destroy the liberty of that republic. So that upon the whole, where sects are tolerated in a state, it is fit they should enjoy a full liberty of conscience, and every other privilege of freeborn subjects, to which no power is annexed. And to preserve their obedience upon all emergencies, a government cannot give them too much ease, nor trust them with too little power.

The clergy are usually charged with a persecuting spirit, which they are said to discover by an implacable hatred to all dissenters: and this appears to be more unreasonable, because they suffer less in their interests by a toleration, than any of the conforming laity: for while the church remains in its present form, no dissenter can possibly have any share in its dignities, revenues, or power; whereas, by once receiving the sacrament, he is rendered capable of the highest employments in the state. And it is very possible, that a narrow education, together with a mixture of human infirmity, may help to beget among some of the clergy in possession, such an aversion and contempt for all innovators, as physicians are apt to have for empirics, or lawyers for pettifoggers, or merchants for pedlars; but since

the number of sectaries does not concern the clergy, either in point of interest or conscience, (it being an evil not in their power to remedy) it is more fair and reasonable to suppose, their dislike proceeds from the dangers they apprehend to the peace of the commonwealth, in the ruin whereof, they must expect to be the first and greatest sufferers.

To conclude this section, it must be observed, that there is a very good word, which has of late suffered much by both parties, I mean moderation; which, the one side very justly disowns, and the other as unjustly pretends to. Beside what passes every day in conversation, any man who reads the papers published by Mr Lesley,* and others of his stamp, must needs conclude, that if this author could make the nation see his adversaries, under the colours he paints them in, we have nothing else to do, but rise as one man, and destroy such wretches from the face of the earth. On the other side, how shall we excuse the advocates for moderation? among whom, I could appeal to a hundred papers of universal approbation by the cause they were writ for, which lay such principles to the whole body of the Tories, as, if they were true, and believed, our next business should in prudence be, to erect gibbets in every parish, and hang them out of the way. But I suppose it is presumed, the common people understand raillery, or at least rhetoric, and will not take hyperboles in too literal a sense; which, however, in some junctures, might prove a desperate experiment. And this is moderation in the

* The champion of the Jacobites, whose cause he defended in a periodical paper, called *The Rehearsal*.

modern sense of the word, to which, speaking impartially, the bigots of both parties are equally entitled.

SECTION II.

The Sentiments of a Church of England Man, with respect to Government.

WE look upon it as a very just reproach, though we cannot agree where to fix it, that there should be so much violence and hatred in religious matters, among men who agree in all fundamentals, and only differ in some ceremonies, or, at most, mere speculative points. Yet, is not this frequently the case between contending parties in a state? For instance: do not the generality of whigs and tories among us, profess to agree in the same fundamentals, their loyalty to the queen, their abjuration of the pretender, the settlement of the crown in the protestant line, and a revolution principle? their affection to the church established, with toleration of dissenters? nay, sometimes they go farther, and pass over into each other's principles; the whigs become great assertors of the prerogative, and the tories of the people's liberty; these, crying down almost the whole set of bishops, and those, defending them; so that the differences fairly stated, would be much of a sort with those in religion among us, and amount to little more than, who should take place, or go in and out first, or kiss the queen's

hand; and what are these but a few court ceremonies? or who should be in the ministry? and what is that to the body of the nation, but a mere speculative point? yet I think it must be allowed, that no religious sects ever carried their mutual aversions to greater heights, than our state-parties have done; who, the more to inflame their passions, have mixed religious and civil animosities together; borrowing one of their appellations from the church, with the addition of high and low, how little soever their disputes relate to the term, as it is generally understood.

I now proceed to deliver the sentiments of a church of England man, with respect to government.

He does not think the church of England so narrowly calculated, that it cannot fall in with any regular species of government: nor does he think any one regular species of government, more acceptable to God, than another. The three generally received in the schools, have all of them their several perfections, and are subject to their several depravations. However, few states are ruined by any defect in their institution, but generally by the corruption of manners; against which, the best institution is no longer a security; and without which, a very ill one may subsist and flourish; whereof there are two pregnant instances now in Europe. The first is, the aristocracy of Venice, which, founded upon the wisest maxims, and digested by a great length of time, has, in our age, admitted so many abuses through the degeneracy of the nobles, that the period of its duration seems to approach. The other is, the united republics of the states-general, where a vein of temperance, industry, parsimony, and a public spirit, running through the whole body of the people, has pre-

served an infant commonwealth, of an untimely birth and sickly constitution, for above a hundred years, through so many dangers and difficulties, as a much more healthy one could never have struggled against, without those advantages.

Where security of person and property are preserved by laws, which none but the whole can repeal, there the great ends of government are provided for, whether the administration be in the hands of one, or of many. Where any one person, or body of men, who do not represent the whole, seize into their hands the power in the last resort, there is properly no longer a government, but what Aristotle and his followers call the abuse and corruption of one. This distinction excludes arbitrary power, in whatever numbers; which, notwithstanding all that Hobbes, Filmer, and others have said to its advantage, I look upon as a greater evil than anarchy itself, as much as a savage is in a happier state of life, than a slave at the oar.

It is reckoned ill manners, as well as unreasonable, for men to quarrel upon difference in opinion; because that is usually supposed to be a thing, which no man can help in himself: but this I do not conceive to be a universal infallible maxim, except in those cases, where the question is pretty equally disputed among the learned and the wise: where it is otherwise, a man of tolerable reason, some experience, and willing to be instructed, may apprehend he is got into a wrong opinion, though the whole course of his mind and inclination would persuade him to believe it true; he may be convinced that he is in an error, though he does not see where it lies, by the bad effects of it in the common conduct of his life, and by

observing those persons, for whose wisdom and goodness he has the greatest deference, to be of a contrary sentiment. According to Hobbes's comparison of reasoning with casting up accounts, whoever finds a mistake in the sum total, must allow himself out, though, after repeated trials, he may not see in which article he has misreckoned. I will instance in one opinion, which I look upon every man obliged in conscience to quit, or in prudence to conceal; I mean, that whoever argues in defence of absolute power in a single person, though he offers the old plausible plea, that it is his opinion, which he cannot help, unless he be convinced, ought, in all free states, to be treated as the common enemy of mankind. Yet this is laid as a heavy charge upon the clergy of the two reigns before the revolution, who, under the terms of passive obedience and nonresistance, are said to have preached up the unlimited power of the prince, because they found it a doctrine that pleased the court, and made way for their preferment. And I believe there may be truth enough in this accusation, to convince us, that human frailty will too often interpose itself, among persons of the holiest function. However, it may be offered in excuse for the clergy, that in the best societies there are some ill members, which a corrupted court and ministry will industriously find out and introduce. Besides, it is manifest, that the greater number of those, who held and preached this doctrine, were misguided by equivocal terms, and by perfect ignorance in the principles of government, which they had not made any part of their study. The question originally put, and, as I remember to have heard it disputed in public schools, was this, Whether under any pretence whatsoever it may be lawful to resist the

supreme magistrate? which was held in the negative; and this is certainly the right opinion. But many of the clergy, and other learned men, deceived by dubious expression, mistook the object to which passive obedience was due. By the supreme magistrate, is properly understood the legislative power, which in all governments must be absolute and unlimited. But the word magistrate, seeming to denote a single person, and to express the executive power, it came to pass, that the obedience due to the legislature, was, for want of knowing or considering this easy distinction, misapplied to the administration. Neither is it any wonder, that the clergy, or other well-meaning people, should fall into this error, which deceived Hobbes himself so far, as to be the foundation of all the political mistakes in his books; where he perpetually confounds the executive with the legislative power, though all well-instituted states have ever placed them in different hands, as may be obvious to those, who know any thing of Athens, Sparta, Thebes, and other republics of Greece, as well as the greater ones of Carthage and Rome.

Besides, it is to be considered, that when these doctrines began to be preached among us, the kingdom had not quite worn out the memory of that horrid rebellion, under the consequences of which it had groaned almost twenty years. And a weak prince, in conjunction with a succession of most prostitute ministers, began again to dispose the people to new attempts, which it was, no doubt, the clergy's duty to endeavour to prevent; though some of them, for want of knowledge in temporal affairs, and others, perhaps from a worse principle, proceeded upon a topic, that, strictly followed, would enslave all mankind.

Among other theological arguments made use of in those times in praise of monarchy, and justification of absolute obedience to a prince, there seemed to be one of a singular nature: it was urged, that Heaven was governed by a monarch, who had none to control his power, but was absolutely obeyed: then it followed, that earthly governments were the more perfect, the nearer they imitated the government in Heaven. All which I look upon as the strongest argument against despotic power, that ever was offered; since no reason can possibly be assigned, why it is best for the world, that God Almighty has such a power, which does not directly prove, that no mortal man should ever have the like.

But though a church of England man thinks every species of government equally lawful, he does not think them equally expedient; or for every country indifferently. There may be something in the climate, naturally disposing men toward one sort of obedience; as is manifest all over Asia, where we never read of any commonwealth, except some small ones on the western coasts, established by the Greeks. There may be a great deal in the situation of a country, and in the present genius of the people. It has been observed, that the temperate climates usually run into moderate governments, and the extremes, into despotic power. It is a remark of Hobbes, that the youth of England are corrupted in their principles of government, by reading the authors of Greece and Rome, who writ under commonwealths. But it might have been more fairly offered for the honour of liberty, that while the rest of the known world was overrun with the arbitrary government of single persons, arts and sciences took their rise, and flourished, only in those few small territories,

where the people were free. And though learning may continue after liberty is lost, as it did in Rome for a while, upon the foundations laid under the commonwealth, and the particular patronage of some emperors, yet it hardly ever began under a tyranny in any nation: because slavery is of all things the greatest clog and obstacle to speculation. And indeed, arbitrary power is but the first natural step, from anarchy or the savage life; the adjusting of power and freedom being an effect and consequence of maturer thinking: and this is no where so duly regulated, as in a limited monarchy: because I believe it may pass for a maxim in state, that the administration cannot be placed in too few hands, nor the legislature in too many. Now, in this material point, the constitution of the English government far exceeds all others at this time on the earth; to which the present establishment of the church does so happily agree, that I think, whoever is an enemy to either, must of necessity be so to both.

He thinks, as our monarchy is constituted, an hereditary right is much to be preferred before election. Because the government here, especially by some late amendments, is so regularly disposed in all its parts, that it almost executes itself. And therefore, upon the death of a prince among us, the administration goes on without any rub or interruption. For the same reasons, we have less to apprehend from the weakness or fury of our monarchs, who have such wise councils to guide the first, and laws to restrain the other. And therefore this hereditary right should be kept so sacred, as never to break the succession, unless where the preserving of it may endanger the constitution; which is not from any intrinsic merit, or unalienable right in a particular family, but to

avoid the consequences that usually attend the ambition of competitors, to which elective kingdoms are exposed ; and which is the only obstacle to hinder them from arriving at the greatest perfection, that government can possibly reach. Hence appears the absurdity of that distinction, between a king *de facto*, and one *de jure*, with respect to us. For every limited monarch is a king *de jure*, because he governs by the consent of the whole, which is authority sufficient to abolish all precedent right. If a king come in by conquest, he is no longer a limited monarch ; if he afterward consent to limitations, he becomes immediately king *de jure* for the same reason.

The great advocates for succession, who affirm it ought not to be violated upon any regard or consideration whatsoever, do insist much upon one argument, that seems to carry little weight. They would have it, that a crown is a prince's birthright, and ought at least to be as well secured to him and his posterity, as the inheritance of any private man ; in short, that he has the same title to his kingdom, which every individual has to his property : now the consequence of this doctrine must be, that as a man may find several ways to waste, mispend, or abuse his patrimony, without being answerable to the laws ; so a king may in like manner do what he will with his own ; that is, he may squander and misapply his revenues, and even alienate the crown, without being called to an account by his subjects. They allow such a prince to be guilty indeed of much folly and wickedness, but for these he is answerable to God, as every private man must be, that is guilty of mismanagement in his own concerns. Now, the folly of this reasoning will best appear, by applying it in a parallel case ; should any man argue,

that a physician is supposed to understand his own art best ; that the law protects and encourages his profession ; and therefore, although he should manifestly prescribe poison to all his patients, whereof they should immediately die, he cannot be justly punished, but is answerable only to God : or should the same be offered in behalf of a divine, who would preach against religion and moral duties ; in either of these two cases, every body would find out the sophistry, and presently answer, that although common men are not exactly skilled in the composition or application of medicines, or in prescribing the limits of duty ; yet the difference between poisons and remedies, is easily known by their effects ; and common reason soon distinguishes between virtue and vice : and it must be necessary to forbid both these the farther practice of their professions, because their crimes are not purely personal to the physician or the divine, but destructive to the public. All which is infinitely stronger in respect to a prince, in whose good or ill conduct, the happiness or misery of a whole nation is included : whereas it is of small consequence to the public, farther than example, how any private person manages his property.

But granting that the right of a lineal successor to a crown, were upon the same foot with the property of a subject ; still it may at any time be transferred by the legislative power, as other properties frequently are. The supreme power in a state can do no wrong, because whatever that does, is the action of all : and when the lawyers apply this maxim to the king, they must understand it only in that sense, as he is administrator of the supreme power ; otherwise it is not universally true, but may be controlled in several instances easy to produce.

And these are the topics we must proceed upon, to justify our exclusion of the young pretender in France ; that of his suspected birth being merely popular, and therefore not made use of, as I remember, since the revolution, in any speech, vote, or proclamation, where there was an occasion to mention him.

As to the abdication of king James, which the advocates on that side look upon to have been forcible and unjust, and consequently void in itself, I think a man may observe every article of the English church, without being in much pain about it. It is not unlikely that all doors were laid open for his departure, and perhaps not without the privity of the prince of Orange, as reasonably concluding, that the kingdom might be better settled in his absence : but to affirm he had any cause to apprehend the same treatment with his father, is an improbable scandal flung upon the nation, by a few bigotted French scribblers, or the invidious assertion of a ruined party at home, in the bitterness of their souls ; not one material circumstance agreeing with those in 1648 ; and the greatest part of the nation having preserved the utmost horror for that ignominious murder : but whether his removal were caused by his own fears, or other men's artifices, it is manifest to me, that supposing the throne to be vacant, which was the foot the nation went upon, the body of the people was thereupon left at liberty to choose what form of government they pleased, by themselves, or their representatives.

The only difficulty of any weight against the proceedings at the revolution, is an obvious objection, to which the writers upon that subject have not yet given a direct or sufficient answer, as if they were in pain at some consequences, which

they apprehend those of the contrary opinion might draw from it. I will repeat this objection, as it was offered me some time ago, with all its advantages, by a very pious, learned, and worthy gentleman of the nonjuring party.*

The force of his argument turned upon this ; that the laws made by the supreme power, cannot otherwise than by the supreme power be annulled : that this consisting in England of a king, lords, and commons, whereof each have a negative voice, no two of them can repeal or enact a law, without consent of the third ; much less may any one of them be entirely excluded from its part of the legislature, by a vote of the other two. That all these maxims were openly violated at the revolution ; where an assembly of the nobles and people, not summoned by the king's writ, (which was an essential part of the constitution) and consequently no lawful meeting, did merely upon their own authority, declare the king to have abdicated, the throne vacant, and gave the crown by a vote to a nephew, when there were three children to inherit ; though by the fundamental laws of the realm, the next heir is immediately to succeed. Neither does it appear, how a prince's abdication can make any other sort of vacancy in the throne, than would be caused by his death ; since he cannot abdicate for his children, (who claim their right of succession by act of parliament) otherwise than by his own consent in form to a bill from the two houses.

And this is the difficulty, that seems chiefly to stick with the most reasonable of those, who, from

* Mr Nelson, author of the Feasts and Fasts of the Church of England.

a mere scruple of conscience, refuse to join with us upon the revolution principle ; but for the rest, are, I believe, as far from loving arbitrary government, as any others can be, who are born under a free constitution, and are allowed to have the least share of common good sense.

In this objection there are two questions included : first, whether upon the foot of our constitution, as it stood in the reign of the late king James, a king of England may be deposed ? The second is, whether the people of England, convened by their own authority, after the king had withdrawn himself in the manner he did, had power to alter the succession.

As for the first, it is a point I shall not presume to determine ; and shall therefore only say, that to any man who holds the negative, I would demand the liberty of putting the case as strongly as I please. I will suppose a prince limited by laws like ours, yet running into a thousand caprices of cruelty like Nero or Caligula ; I will suppose him to murder his mother and his wife ; to commit incest, to ravish matrons, to blow up the senate, and burn his metropolis ; openly to renounce God and Christ, and worship the devil : these and the like exorbitances, are in the power of a single person to commit, without the advice of a ministry, or assistance of an army. And if such a king, as I have described, cannot be deposed but by his own consent in parliament, I do not well see how he can be resisted, or what can be meant by a limited monarchy ; or what signifies the people's consent in making and repealing laws, if the person who administers, has no tie but conscience, and is answerable to none but God. I desire no stronger proof that an opinion must be false, than to find very great absurdities annexed to it ; and

there cannot be greater than in the present case; for it is not a bare speculation that kings may run into such enormities as are above-mentioned: the practice may be proved by examples, not only drawn from the first Cæsars, or later emperors, but many modern princes of Europe; such as Peter the Cruel, Philip the Second of Spain, John Basilovitz of Muscovy, and in our own nation, king John, Richard the Third, and Henry the Eighth. But there cannot be equal absurdities supposed in maintaining the contrary opinion; because it is certain, that princes have it in their power, to keep a majority on their side, by any tolerable administration, till provoked by continual oppressions; no man indeed can then answer, where the madness of the people will stop.

As to the second part of the objection; whether the people of England convened by their own authority, upon king James's precipitate departure, had power to alter the succession?

In answer to this, I think it is manifest from the practice of the wisest nations, and who seem to have had the truest notions of freedom, that when a prince was laid aside for maladministration, the nobles and people, if they thought it necessary for the public weal, did resume the administration of the supreme power, (the power itself having been always in them,) and did not only alter the succession, but often the very form of government too; because they believed there was no natural right in one man to govern another, but that all was by institution, force, or consent. Thus, the cities of Greece, when they drove out their tyrannical kings, either chose others from a new family, or abolished the kingly government, and became free states. Thus the Romans, upon the expulsion of Tarquin, found it

inconvenient for them to be subject any longer to the pride, the lust, the cruelty, and arbitrary will of single persons, and therefore, by general consent, entirely altered the whole frame of their government. Nor do I find the proceedings of either, in this point, to have been condemned by any historian of the succeeding ages.

But a great deal has been already said by other writers upon this invidious and beaten subject; therefore I shall let it fall; though the point is commonly mistaken, especially by the lawyers; who, of all others, seem least to understand the nature of government in general; like under-workmen, who are expert enough at making a single wheel in a clock, but are utterly ignorant how to adjust the several parts, or regulate the movements.

To return therefore from this digression: it is a church of England man's opinion, that the freedom of a nation consists in an absolute unlimited legislative power, wherein the whole body of the people are fairly represented; and in an executive duly limited; because on this side likewise, there may be dangerous degrees, and a very ill extreme. For, when two parties in a state are pretty equal in power, pretensions, merit, and virtue, (for these two last are, with relation to parties and a court, quite different things,) it has been the opinion of the best writers upon government, that a prince ought not in any sort to be under the guidance or influence of either; because he declines by this means from his office of presiding over the whole, to be the head of a party; which, beside the indignity, renders him answerable for all public mismanagements, and the consequences of them; and in whatever state this happens, there must

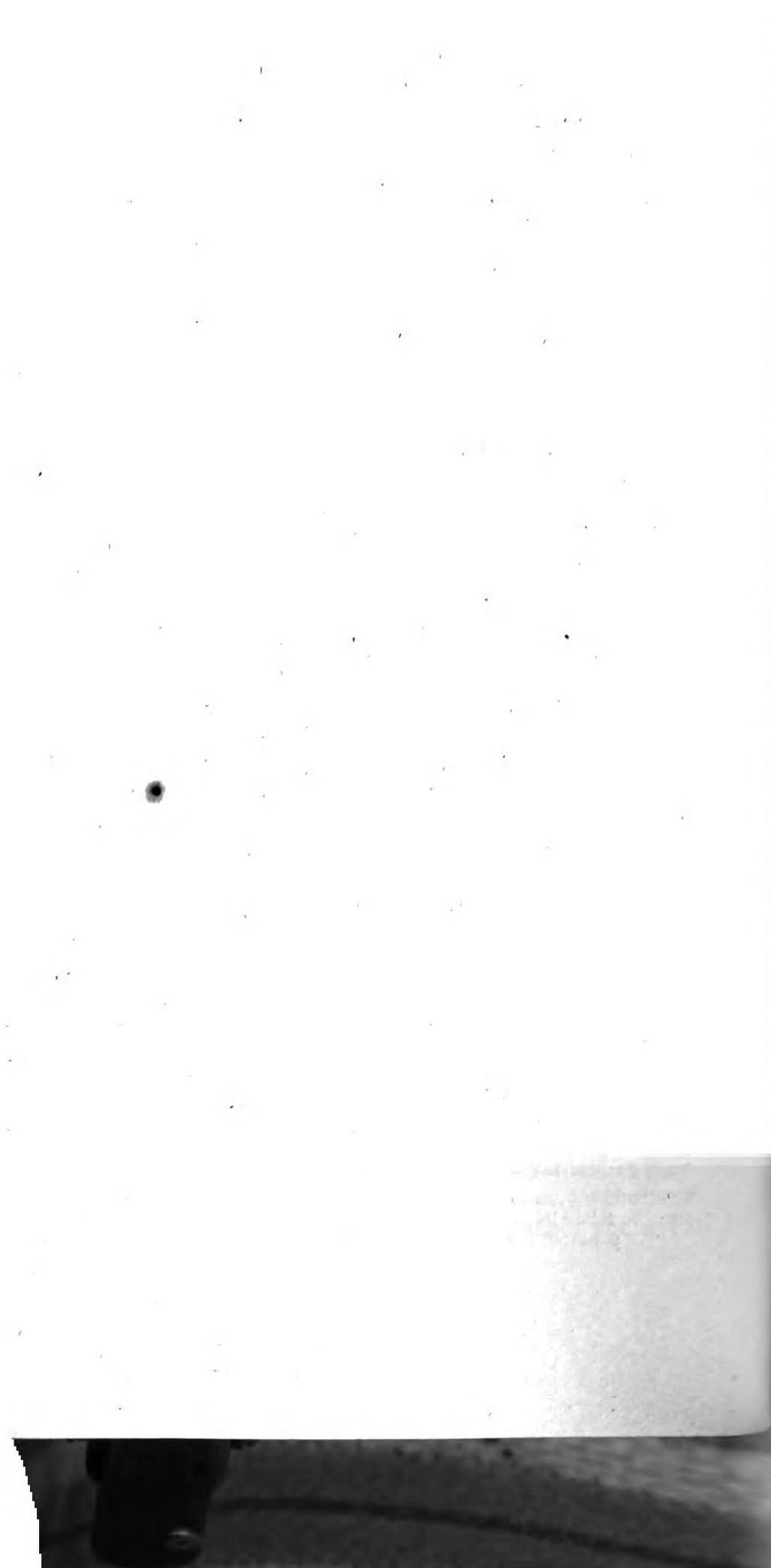
either be a weakness in the prince or ministry ; or else the former is too much restrained by the nobles, or those who represent the people.

To conclude: a church of England man may, with prudence and a good conscience, approve the professed principles of one party more than the other, according as he thinks they best promote the good of church and state ; but he will never be swayed by passion or interest, to advance an opinion, merely because it is that of the party he most approves ; which one single principle, he looks upon as the root of all our civil animosities. To enter into a party, as into an order of friars, with so resigned an obedience to superiors, is very unsuitable both with the civil and religious liberties, we so zealously assert. Thus the understandings of a whole senate are often enslaved, by three or four leaders on each side, who, instead of intending the public weal, have their hearts wholly set upon ways and means, how to get or to keep employments. But to speak more at large, how has this spirit of faction mingled itself with the mass of the people, changed their nature and manners, and the very genius of the nation ! broke all the laws of charity, neighbourhood, alliance, and hospitality ; destroyed all ties of friendship, and divided families against themselves ! and no wonder it should be so, when in order to find out the character of a person, instead of inquiring whether he be a man of virtue, honour, piety, wit, good sense, or learning ; the modern question is only, whether he be a whig or a tory ; under which terms, all good and ill qualities are included.

Now, because it is a point of difficulty to choose an exact middle between two ill extremes, it may be worth inquiring in the present case, which of these a wise and good man would rather seem to

avoid: taking therefore their own good and ill characters, with due abatements and allowances for partiality and passion, I should think, that in order to preserve the constitution entire in church and state, whoever has a true value for both, would be sure to avoid the extremes of whig, for the sake of the former; and the extremes of tory, on account of the latter.

I have now said all that I could think convenient, upon so nice a subject, and find I have the ambition common with other reasoners, to wish at least that both parties may think me in the right; which would be of some use to those who have any virtue left, but are blindly drawn into the extravagancies of either, upon false representations, to serve the ambition or malice of designing men, without any prospect of their own. But if that is not to be hoped for, my next wish should be, that both might think me in the wrong: which I would understand as an ample justification of myself, and a sure ground to believe, that I have proceeded at least with impartiality, and perhaps with truth.



SOME ARGUMENTS

AGAINST ENLARGING THE POWER OF BISHOPS,

IN LETTING LEASES.*

“ Mihi credite, major hæreditas venit unicuique vestrum in iisdem bonis a jure et a legibus, quam ab iis a quibus illa ipsa bona relicta sunt.” CICERO pro A. Cæcina.

October 21, 1723.

IN handling this subject, I shall proceed wholly upon the supposition, that those of our party, who profess themselves members of the church

* This tract was written in 1723, when the measure therein reprobated was under consideration. Swift considered it as an indirect mode of gratifying the existing bishops, whom he did not regard with peculiar respect or complacency, at the expence of the church establishment, to which he was attached with most sincere devotion. The spirit of his opposition is, therefore, in this instance, peculiarly caustic. He had to plead, however, that his own practice was as strict as the self-denial he expected from the bishops. He never took fines for renewal of leases of the chapter lands, but always preferred raising the rent, as calculated to promote the future value of the living, although less advantageous to the immediate incumbent.

established, and under the apostolical government of bishops, do desire the continuance and transmission of it to posterity, at least in as good a condition as it is at present: because, as this discourse is not calculated for dissenters of any kind, so neither will it suit the talk or sentiments of those persons, who, with the denomination of churchmen, are oppressors of the inferior clergy, and perpetually quarrelling at the great incomes of the bishops; which is a traditional cant delivered down from former times, and continued with great reason, although it be near 200 years since almost three parts in four of the church revenues have been taken from the clergy, beside the spoils that have been gradually made ever since of glebes and other land, by the confusion of times, the fraud of encroaching neighbours, or the power of oppressors too great to be encountered.

About the time of the reformation, many popish bishops of this kingdom, knowing they must have been soon ejected if they would not change their religion, made long leases and fee-farms of great part of their lands, reserving very inconsiderable rents, sometimes only a chiefry, by a power they assumed directly contrary to many ancient canons, yet consistent enough with the common law. This trade held on for many years after the bishops became protestants; and some of their names are still remembered with infamy, on account of enriching their families by such sacrilegious alienations. By these means episcopal revenues were so low reduced, that three or four sees were often united to make a tolerable competency. For some remedy to this evil, king James the First, by a bounty that became a good Christian prince, bestowed several forfeited lands

on the northern bishoprics: but in all other parts of the kingdom the church continued still in the same distress and poverty; some of the sees hardly possessing enough to maintain a country vicar. About the middle of king Charles the First's reign, the legislature here thought fit to put a stop at least to any farther alienations; and so a law was enacted, prohibiting all bishops and other ecclesiastical corporations, from setting their lands for above the term of twenty-one years: the rent reserved to be one half of the real value of such lands at the time they were set, without which condition the lease to be void.

Soon after the restoration of king Charles the Second, the parliament taking into consideration the miserable estate of the church, certain lands, by way of augmentation, were granted to eight bishops in the act of settlement, and confirmed in the act of explanation; of which bounty, as I remember, three sees were in a great measure defeated; but by what accidents it is not here of any importance to relate.

This at present is the condition of the church in Ireland, with regard to episcopal revenues: which I have thus briefly, (and perhaps imperfectly,) deduced for some information to those, whose thoughts do not lead them to such considerations.

By virtue of the statute already mentioned, under king Charles the First, limiting ecclesiastical bodies to the term of twenty-one years under the reserved rent of half real value, the bishops have had some share in the gradual rise of lands, without which they could not have been supported with any common decency that might become their station. It is above eighty years since the passing of that act: the see of Meath, one of the

best in the kingdom, was then worth about 400*l.* *per annum*; the poorer ones in the same proportion. If this were their present condition, I cannot conceive how they would have been able to pay for their patents, or buy their robes: but this will certainly be the condition of their successors, if such a bill should pass, as they say is now intended, which I will suppose; and of which I believe many persons, who may give a vote for it, are not aware.

However, this is the act which is now attempted to be repealed, or at least eluded; some are for giving bishops leave to let fee-farms, others would allow them to let leases for lives; and the most moderate would repeal that clause, by which the bishops are bound to let their lands at half value.

The reasons for the rise of value in lands are of two kinds. Of the first kind, are long peace and settlement after the devastations of war; plantations, improvements of bad soil, recovery of bogs and marshes, advancement of trade and manufactures, increase of inhabitants, encouragement of agriculture, and the like.

But there is another reason for the rise of land, more gradual, constant, and certain; which will have its effects in countries that are very far from flourishing in any of the advantages I have just mentioned: I mean the perpetual decrease in the value of gold and silver. I shall discourse upon these two different kinds with a view toward the bill now attempted.

As to the first: I cannot see how this kingdom is at any height of improvement, while four parts in five of the plantations for thirty years past have been real disimprovements; nine in ten of the quick-set hedges being ruined for want of care or

skill. And as to forest trees, they being often taken out of woods, and planted in single rows on the tops of ditches, it is impossible they should grow to be of use, beauty, or shelter. Neither can it be said, that the soil of Ireland is improved to its full height while so much lies all winter under water, and the bogs made almost desperate by the ill cutting of the turf. There has indeed been some little improvement in the manufactures of linen and woollen, although very short of perfection; but our trade was never in so low a condition: and as to agriculture, of which all wise nations have been so tender, the desolation made in the country by engrossing graziers, and the great yearly importation of corn from England, are lamentable instances under what discouragement it lies.

But, notwithstanding all these mortifications, I suppose there is no well-wisher to his country without a little hope, that in time the kingdom may be on a better foot in some of the articles above mentioned. But it would be hard, if ecclesiastical bodies should be the only persons excluded from any share in public advantages, which yet can never happen, without a greater share of profit to their tenants: if God sends rain equally upon the just and the unjust, why should those who wait at his altars, and are instructors of the people, be cut off from partaking in the general benefits of law or of nature?

But, as this way of reasoning may seem to bear a more favourable eye to the clergy, than perhaps will suit with the present disposition or fashion of the age; I shall therefore dwell more largely upon the second reason for the rise of land, which is the perpetual decrease of the value of gold and silver.

This may be observed from the course of the Roman history above two thousand years before those inexhaustible silver mines of Potosi were known. The value of an obolus, and of every other coin, between the time of Romulus and that of Augustus, gradually sunk above five parts in six, as appears by several passages out of the best authors. And yet the prodigious wealth of that state did not arise from the increase of bullion in the world by the discovery of new mines, but from a much more accidental cause, which was the spreading of their conquest, and thereby importing into Rome and Italy, the riches of the east and west.

When the seat of empire was removed to Constantinople, the tide of money flowed that way without ever returning; and was scattered in Asia. But when that mighty empire was overthrown by the northern people, such a stop was put to all trade and commerce, that vast sums of money were buried, to escape the plundering of the conquerors; and what remained was carried off by those ravagers.

It were no difficult matter to compute the value of money in England during the Saxon reigns; but the monkish and other writers since the conquest, have put the matter in a clearer light, by the several accounts they have given us of the value of corn and cattle, in years of dearth and plenty. Every one knows, that king John's whole portion, before he came to the crown, was but five thousand pounds, without a foot of land.

I have likewise seen the steward's account of an ancient noble family in England, written in Latin between three and four hundred years ago, with the several prices of wine and victuals, to confirm my observations.

I have been at the trouble of computing, (as others have done,) the different values of money for about four hundred years past. Henry duke of Lancaster, who lived about that period, founded an hospital at Leicester for a certain number of old men, charging his lands with a groat a week to each for their maintenance, which is to this day duly paid them. In those times, a penny was equal to ten-pence half-penny and somewhat more than half-a-farthing in ours; which makes about eight ninths' difference.

This is plain also from the old custom upon many estates in England, to let for leases of lives (renewable at pleasure), where the reserved rent is usually about twelve-pence a pound, which then was near the half real value: and although the fines be not fixed, yet the landlord gets altogether not above three shillings in the pound of the worth of his land: and the tenants are so wedded to this custom, that if the owner suffer three lives to expire, none of them will take a lease on other conditions; or, if he brings in a foreigner, who will agree to pay a reasonable rent, the other tenants, by all manner of injuries, will make that foreigner so uneasy, that he must be forced to quit the farm; as the late earl of Bath felt, by the experience of above ten thousand pounds loss.

The gradual decrease for about two hundred years after, was not considerable, and therefore I do not rely on the account given by some historians, that Harry the Seventh left behind him eighteen hundred thousand pounds; for although the West Indies were discovered before his death, and although he had the best talents and instruments for exacting money ever possessed by any prince since the time of Vespasian (whom he re-

sembled in many particulars), yet I conceive, that in his days, the whole coin of England could hardly amount to such a sum. For in the reign of Philip and Mary, sir Thomas Cokayne, of Derbyshire, the best housekeeper of his quality in the county, allowed his lady fifty pounds a year for maintaining the family, one pound a year wages to each servant, and two pounds to the steward; as I was told by a person of quality, who had seen the original account of his economy. Now this sum of fifty pounds, added to the advantages of a large domain, might be equal to about five hundred pounds a year at present, or somewhat more than four-fifths.

The great plenty of silver in England began in queen Elizabeth's reign, when Drake and others took vast quantities of coin and bullion from the Spaniards, either upon their own American coasts, or in their return to Spain. However, so much has been imported annually from that time to this, that the value of money in England, and most parts of Europe, is sunk above one half within the space of a hundred years, notwithstanding the great export of silver for about eighty years past to the East Indies, from whence it never returns. But gold not being liable to the same accident, and by new discoveries growing every day more plentiful, seems in danger of becoming a drug.

This has been the progress of the value of money in former ages, and must of necessity continue so for the future, without some new invasion of Goths and Vandals, to destroy law, property, and religion, alter the very face of nature, and turn the world upside down.

I must repeat, that what I am to say upon the subject is intended only for the conviction of those

among our own party, who are true lovers of the church, and would be glad it should continue, in a tolerable degree of prosperity, to the end of the world.

The church is supposed to last for ever, both in its discipline and doctrine; which is a privilege common to every petty corporation, who must likewise observe the laws of their foundation. If a gentleman's estate, which now yields him a thousand pounds a year, had been set for ever at the highest value, even in the flourishing days of king Charles the Second, would it now amount to above four or five hundred at most? What if this had happened two or three hundred years ago; would the reserved rent at this day be any more than a small chiefry? Suppose the revenues of a bishop to have been under the same circumstances: could he now be able to perform works of hospitality and charity? Thus, if the revenues of a bishop be limited to a thousand pounds a year; how will his successor be in a condition to support his station with decency, when the same denomination of money shall not answer a half, a quarter, or an eighth part of the sum? which must unavoidably be the consequence of any bill to elude the limiting act, whereby the church was preserved from utter ruin.

The same reason holds good in all corporations whatsoever; who cannot follow a more pernicious practice than that of granting perpetuities, for which many of them smart to this day; although the leaders among them are often so stupid as not to perceive it, or sometimes so knavish as to find their private account in cheating the community.

Several colleges in Oxford were aware of this growing evil about an hundred years ago; and

instead of limiting their rents to a certain sum of money, prevailed with their tenants to pay the price of so many barrels of corn, to be valued as the market went at two seasons (as I remember) in the year. For a barrel of corn is of a real intrinsic value, which gold and silver are not: and by this invention, these colleges have preserved a tolerable subsistence for their fellows and students to this day.

The present bishops will indeed be no sufferers by such a bill; because, their ages considered, they cannot expect to see any great decrease in the value of money; or at worst they can make it up in the fines, which will probably be greater than usual upon the change of leases into fee-farms or lives, or without the power of obliging their tenants to a real half value. And, as I cannot well blame them for taking such advantages (considering the nature of human kind) when the question is only, whether the money shall be put into their own or another man's pocket; so they will never be excusable before God or man, if they do not to their death oppose, declare, and protest against any such bill, as must in its consequences complete the ruin of the church, and of their own order in this kingdom.

If the fortune of a private person be diminished by the weakness or inadvertency of his ancestors, in letting leases for ever at low rents, the world lies open to his industry for purchasing more: but the church is barred by a dead hand; or, if it were otherwise, yet the custom of making bequests to it, has been out of practice for almost two hundred years, and a great deal directly contrary has been its fortune.

I have been assured by a person of some consequence, to whom I am likewise obliged for the

account of some other facts already related, that the late bishop of Salisbury * (the greatest whig of that bench in his days) confessed to him, that the liberty which bishops in England have of letting leases for lives, would, in his opinion, be one day the ruin of episcopacy there; and thought the church in this kingdom happy by the limitation act.

And have we not already found the effect of this different proceeding in both kingdoms? have not two English prelates quitted their peerage and seats in parliament, in a nation of freedom, for the sake of a more ample revenue even in this unhappy kingdom, rather than lie under the mortification of living below their dignity at home? for which however they cannot be justly censured. I know, indeed, some persons, who offer as an argument for repealing the limiting bill, that it may in future ages prevent the practice of providing this kingdom with bishops from England, when the only temptation will be removed. And they alledge, that as things have gone for some years past, gentlemen will grow discouraged from sending their sons to the university, and from suffering them to enter into holy orders, when they are likely to languish under a curacy or small vicarage to the end of their lives: but this is all a vain imagination; for the decrease in the value of money will equally affect both kingdoms: and, besides, when bishoprics here grow too small to invite over men of credit and consequence, they will be left more fully to the disposal of a chief governor, who can never fail of some worthless illiterate chaplain, fond of a

* Dr Burnet.

title and precedence. Thus will that whole bench, in an age or two, be composed of mean, ignorant, fawning gownmen, humble suppliants and dependants upon the court for a morsel of bread, and ready to serve every turn that shall be demanded from them, in hopes of getting some *commendam* tacked to their sees: which must then be the trade, as it is now too much in England, to the great discouragement of the inferior clergy. Neither is that practice without example among us.

It is now about eighty-five years since the passing of that limiting act, and there is but one instance in the memory of man, of a bishop's lease broken upon the plea of not being statutable; which, in every body's opinion, could have been lost by no other person than he who was then tenant, and happened to be very ungracious in his county. In the present bishop of Meath's case, that plea did not avail, although the lease were notoriously unstatutable; the rent reserved being, as I have been told, not a seventh part of the real value; yet the jury, upon their oaths, very gravely found it to be according to the statute; and one of them was heard to say, that he would eat his shoes before he would give a verdict for the bishop. A very few more have made the same attempt with as little success. Every bishop, and other ecclesiastical body, reckon forty pounds in an hundred to be a reasonable half value; or if it be only a third part, it seldom or never breeds any difference between landlord or tenant. But when the rent is from five to nine or ten parts less than the worth, the bishop, if he consults the good of his see, will be apt to expostulate; and the tenant, if he be an honest man, will have some regard to the reasonableness

and justice of the demand, so as to yield to a moderate advancement, rather than engage in a suit, where law and equity are directly against him. By these means the bishops have been so true to their trusts, as to procure some small share in the advancement of rents; although it be notorious that they do not receive the third penny (fines included) of the real value of their lands throughout the kingdom.

I was never able to imagine what inconvenience could accrue to the public, by one or two thousand pounds a year in the hands of a protestant bishop, any more than of a lay person.* The former, generally speaking, lives as piously and hospitably as the other; pays his debts as honestly, and spends as much of his revenue among his tenants: besides, if they be his immediate tenants, you may distinguish them at first sight by their habits and horses; or, if you go to their houses, by their comfortable way of living. But the misfortune is, that such immediate tenants, generally speaking, have others under them, and so a third and fourth in subordination, till it comes to the welder (as they call him), who sits at a rack-rent, and lives as miserably as an Irish farmer upon a new lease from a lay landlord. But, suppose a bishop happens to be avaricious (as being composed of the same stuff with other men), the consequence to the public is no worse than if he were a squire; for he leaves his fortune to his son, or near relation, who, if he be rich enough, will never think of entering into the church.

* This part of the paragraph is to be applied to the period when the whole was written, which was in 1723, when several of queen Anne's bishops were living.

And as there can be no disadvantage to the public in a protestant country, that a man should hold lands as a bishop, any more than if he were a temporal person; so it is of great advantage to the community, where a bishop lives as he ought to do. He is bound in conscience to reside in his diocese, and by a solemn promise to keep hospitality; his estate is spent in the kingdom, not remitted to England; he keeps the clergy to their duty, and is an example of virtue both to them and the people. Suppose him an ill man; yet his very character will withhold him from any great or open exorbitancies. But in fact it must be allowed, that some bishops of this kingdom, within twenty years past, have done very signal and lasting acts of public charity; great instances whereof are the late * and present † primate, and the lord archbishop of Dublin ‡ that now is, who has left memorials of his bounty in many parts of his province. I might add the bishop of Raphoe, § and several others: not forgetting the late dean of Down, Dr Pratt, who bestowed one thousand pounds upon the university: which foundation (that I may observe by the way), if the bill proposed should pass, would be in the same circumstances with the bishops, nor ever able again to advance the stipends of the fellows and students, as lately they found it necessary to do; the determinate sum appointed by the statutes for commons, being not half sufficient, by the fall of money, to afford necessary sustenance. But the passing of such a bill must put an end to all ecclesiastical beneficence for the time to come; and

* Dr Marsh.

† Dr Lindsay.

‡ Dr King.

§ Dr Forster.

whether this will be supplied by those who are to reap the benefit, better than it has been done by grantees of impropriate tithes, who received them upon the old church conditions of keeping hospitality, it will be easy to conjecture.

To allege, that passing such a bill would be a good encouragement to improve bishops' lands, is a great error. Is it not the general method of landlords to wait the expiration of a lease, and then cant their lands to the highest bidder? and what should hinder the same course to be taken in church leases, when the limitation is removed of paying half the real value to the bishop? In riding through the country, how few improvements do we see upon the estates of laymen, farther than about their own domains? To say the truth, it is a great misfortune, as well to the public as to the bishops themselves, that their lands are generally let to lords and great squires, who, in reason, were never designed to be tenants; and therefore may naturally murmur at the payment of rent, as a subserviency they were not born to. If the tenants to the church were honest farmers, they would pay their fines and rents with cheerfulness, improve their lands, and thank God they were to give but a moderate half value for what they held. I have heard a man of a thousand pound a year talk with great contempt of bishops' leases, as being on a worse foot than the rest of his estate; and he had certainly reason: my answer was, that such leases were originally intended only for the benefit of industrious husbandmen, who would think it a great blessing to be provided for, instead of having their farms screwed up to the height, not eating one comfortable meal in a year, nor able to find shoes for their children.

I know not any advantage that can accrue by such a bill, except the preventing of perjury in jurymen, and false dealings in tenants; which is a remedy like that of giving my money to a highwayman, before he attempts to take it by force; and so I shall be sure to prevent the sin of robbery.

I had wrote thus far, and thought to have made an end; when a bookseller sent me a small pamphlet, entitled, *The Case of the Laity, with some Queries*; full of the strongest malice against the clergy, that I have any where met with since the reign of Toland, and others of that tribe. These kinds of advocates do infinite mischief to OUR GOOD CAUSE, by giving grounds to the unjust reproaches of TORIES and JACOBITES, who charge us with being enemies to the church. If I bear a hearty unfeigned loyalty to his majesty king George, and the house of Hanover, not shaken in the least by the hardships we lie under, which never can be imputable to so gracious a prince; if I sincerely abjure the pretender, and all popish successors; if I bear a due veneration to the glorious memory of the late king William, who preserved these kingdoms from popery and slavery, with the expense of his blood, and hazard of his life; and lastly, if I am for a proper indulgence to all dissenters, I think nothing more can be reasonably demanded of me as a WHIG, and that my political catechism is full and complete. But whoever, under the shelter of that party denomination, and of many great professions of loyalty, would destroy, or undermine, or injure the church established; I utterly disown him, and think he ought to choose another name of distinction for himself and his adherents. I came into the cause upon other principles, which by the grace of God I mean to pre-

serve as long as I live. Shall we justify the accusations of our adversaries? *Hoc Ithacus velit.*—The tories and jacobites will behold us with a malicious pleasure, determined upon the ruin of our friends. For is not the present set of bishops almost entirely of that number, as well as a great majority of the principal clergy? And a short time will reduce the whole by vacancies upon death.

An impartial reader, if he pleases to examine what I have already said, will easily answer the bold queries in the pamphlet mentioned: he will be convinced, that the reason still strongly exists, for which that limiting law was enacted. A reasonable man will wonder, where can be the insufferable grievances, that an ecclesiastical landlord should expect a moderate or a third part value in rent for his lands, when his title is at least as ancient and as legal as that of a layman: who is yet but seldom guilty of giving such beneficial bargains. Has the nation been thrown into confusion; and have many poor families been ruined by rack-rents paid for the lands of the church? does the nation cry out to have a law that must in time send their bishops a-begging? but God be thanked, the clamour of enemies to the church is not yet the cry, and I hope will never prove the voice, of the nation. The clergy, I conceive, will hardly allow that the people maintain them, any more than in the sense that all landlords whatsoever are maintained by the people. Such assertions as these, and the insinuations they carry along with them, proceed from principles which cannot be avowed by those who are for preserving the happy constitution in church and state. Whoever were the proposers of such queries, it might have provoked a bold writer to retaliate, perhaps with more justice than prudence, by showing at

whose door the grievance lies, and that the bishops at least are not to answer for the poverty of tenants.

To gratify this great reformer, who enlarges the episcopal rent-roll almost one half, let me suppose that all the church-lands in the kingdom were thrown up to the laity; would the tenants in such a case sit easier in their rents than they do now? or would the money be equally spent in the kingdom? No; the farmer would be screwed up to the utmost penny by the agents and stewards of absentees, and the revenues employed in making a figure at London; to which city a full third part of the whole income of Ireland is annually returned, to answer that single article of maintenance for Irish landlords.

Another of his quarrels is against pluralities and non-residence. As to the former, it is a word of ill name, but not well understood. The clergy having been stripped of the greatest part of their revenues, the glebes being generally lost, the tithes in the hands of laymen, the churches demolished, and the country depopulated; in order to preserve a face of Christianity, it was necessary to unite small vicarages sufficient to make a tolerable maintenance for a minister. The profit of ten or a dozen of these unions seldom amounts to above eighty or a hundred pounds a year. If there be a very few dignitaries whose preferments are perhaps more liable to this accusation, it is to be supposed, they may be favourites of the time; or persons of superior merit, for whom there has ever been some indulgence in all governments.

As to non-residence, I believe there is no Christian country upon earth, where the clergy have less to answer for upon that article. I am confident there are not ten clergymen in the kingdom,

who, properly speaking, can be termed non-residents: for surely we are not to reckon in that number those, who, for want of glebes, are forced to retire to the nearest neighbouring village for a cabin to put their heads in: the leading man of the parish, when he makes the greatest clamour, being least disposed to accommodate the minister with an acre of ground. And, indeed, considering the difficulties the clergy lie under upon this head, it has been frequent matter of wonder to me, how they are able to perform that part of their duty so well as they do.

There is a noble author, * who has lately addressed to the house of commons an excellent discourse for the encouragement of agriculture; full of most useful hints, which I hope that honourable assembly will consider as they deserve. I am no stranger to his lordship; and, excepting in what relates to the church, there are few persons with whose opinions I am better pleased to agree; and am therefore grieved when I find him charging the inconveniences in the payment of tithes upon the clergy and their proctors. His lordship is above considering a very known and vulgar truth, that the meanest farmer has all manner of advantages against the most powerful clergyman, by whom it is impossible he can be wronged, although the minister were ever so ill disposed; the whole system of teasing, perplexing, and defrauding the proctor, or his master, being as well known to every ploughman, as the reaping or sowing of his corn, and much more artfully practised. Besides, the leading man in the parish must have his tithes at his own rate, which is

* Lord Molesworth.

hardly ever above one quarter of the value. And I have heard it computed by many skilful observers, whose interest was not concerned, that the clergy did not receive, throughout the kingdom, one half of what the laws have made their due.

As to his lordship's discontent against the bishop's court, I shall not interpose farther than in venturing my private opinion, that the clergy would be very glad to recover their just dues, by a more short, decisive, and compulsive method, than such a cramped limited jurisdiction will allow.

His lordship is not the only person disposed to give the clergy the honour of being the sole encouragers of all new improvements. If hops, hemp, flax, and twenty things more, are to be planted, the clergy alone must reward the industrious farmer, by abatement of the tithe. What if the owner of nine parts in ten, would please to abate proportionably in his rent for every acre thus improved? Would not a man just dropped from the clouds, upon a full hearing, judge the demand to be at least as reasonable?

I believe no man will dispute his lordship's title to his estate; nor will I the *jus divinum* of tithes, which he mentions with some emotion. I suppose the affirmative would be of little advantage to the clergy, for the same reason, that a maxim in law has more weight in the world than an article of faith. And yet I think there may be such a thing as sacrilege; because it is frequently mentioned by Greek and Roman authors, as well as described in Holy Writ. This I am sure of, that his lordship would at any time excuse a parliament for not concerning itself in his properties, without his own consent.

The observations I have made upon his lord-

ship's discourse, have not, I confess, been altogether proper to my subject: however, since he has been pleased therein to offer some proposals to the house of commons with relation to the clergy, I hope he will excuse me for differing from him; which proceeds from his own principle, the desire of defending liberty and property, that he has so strenuously and constantly maintained.

But the other writer openly declares for a law empowering the bishops to set fee-farms; and says, "Whoever intimates, that they will deny their consent to such a reasonable law, which the whole nation cries for, are enemies to them and the church." Whether this be his real opinion, or only a strain of mirth and irony, the matter is not much. However, my sentiments are so directly contrary to his, that I think, whoever impartially reads and considers what I have written upon this argument, has either no regard for the church established under the hierarchy of bishops, or will never consent to any law, that shall repeal or elude the limiting clause relating to the real half value, contained in the act of parliament *decimo Caroli*, for the preservation of the inheritance, rights and profits of lands belonging to the church and persons ecclesiastical; which was grounded upon reasons that do still and must for ever subsist.

October 21, 1723.

REASONS HUMBLY OFFERED

TO HIS GRACE

WILLIAM LORD ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN, &c.

THE HUMBLE REPRESENTATION OF THE CLERGY
OF THE CITY OF DUBLIN.

Jan. 1724.

MY LORD,

YOUR Grace having been pleased to communicate to us a certain brief, by letters patent, for the relief of one Charles M'Carthy, whose house in College-green, Dublin, was burnt by an accidental fire; and having desired us to consider of the said brief, and give our opinions thereof to your Grace:

We, the clergy of the city of Dublin, in compliance with your Grace's desire, and with great acknowledgments for your paternal tenderness toward us, having maturely considered the said brief by letters patent, compared the several parts of it with what is enjoined us by the rubrick (which is confirmed by act of parliament) and consulted persons skilled in the laws of the church; do, in the names of ourselves and of the rest of our brethren the clergy of the diocese of Dublin, most humbly represent to your grace:

First, That by this brief, your Grace is required and commanded, to recommend and command all the parsons, vicars, &c. to advance so great an act of charity.

We shall not presume to determine how far your Grace may be commanded by the said brief, but we humbly conceive that the clergy of your diocese cannot, by any law now in being, be commanded by your Grace to advance the said act of charity, any otherwise than by reading the said brief in our several churches, as prescribed by the rubrick.

Secondly, Whereas it is said in the said brief, "That the parsons, vicars, &c. upon the first Lord's day, or opportunity, after the receipt of the copy of the said brief, shall, deliberately and affectionately, publish and declare the tenor thereof to his majesty's subjects, and earnestly persuade, exhort, and stir them up, to contribute freely and cheerfully toward the relief of the said sufferer:"

We do not comprehend what is meant by the word *opportunity*. We never do preach upon any day except the Lord's day, or some solemn days legally appointed; neither is it possible for the strongest constitution among us to obey this command (which includes no less than a whole sermon) upon any other opportunity than when our people are met together in the church; and to perform this work in every house where the parishes are very populous, consisting sometimes here in town of nine hundred or one thousand houses, would take up the space of a year, although we should preach in two families every day; and almost as much time in the country, where the parishes are of large extent, the roads bad, and the people too poor to receive us and give charity at once.

But, if it be meant that these exhortations are commanded to be made in the church upon the Lord's day; we are humbly of opinion, that it is left to the discretion of the clergy, to choose

what subjects they think most proper to preach on, and at what times: and if they preach either false doctrines or seditious principles, they are liable to be punished.

It may possibly happen that the sufferer recommended may be a person not deserving the favour intended by the brief; in which case no minister who knows the sufferer to be an undeserving person, can, with a safe conscience, deliberately and affectionately publish the brief, much less earnestly persuade, exhort, and stir up the people to contribute freely and cheerfully toward the relief of such a sufferer. *

Thirdly, Whereas, in the said brief, the ministers and curates are required, "on the week-days next after the Lord's day when the brief was read, to go from house to house, with their churchwardens, to ask and receive from all persons the said charity:" We cannot but observe here, that the said ministers are directly made collectors of the said charity in conjunction with the churchwardens, which however, we presume, was not intended, as being against all law and precedent: and therefore, we apprehend, there may be some inconsistency, which leaves us at a loss how to proceed: for, in the next paragraph, the ministers and curates are only required, where they conveniently can, to accompany the churchwardens, or procure some other of the chief inhabitants to do the same. And in a following paragraph, the whole work seems left entirely to the churchwardens, who are required to use their utmost dili-

* This M'Carthy's house was burnt in the month of August, 1723: and the universal opinion of mankind was, that M'Carthy himself was the person who set fire to the house.

gence to gather and collect the said charity, and to pay the same, in ten days after, to the parson, vicar, &c.

In answer to this, we do represent to your grace our humble opinion, that neither we, nor our churchwardens, can be legally commanded or required to go from house to house, to receive the said charity; because your grace has informed us in your order, at your visitation, A. D. 1712, "That neither we nor our churchwardens are bound to make any collections for the poor, save in the church;" which also appears plainly by the rubrick, that appoints both time and place, as your grace has observed in your said order.

We do likewise assure your grace, that it is *not* in our power to procure some of the chief inhabitants of our parishes to accompany the churchwardens from house to house in these collections: and we have reason to believe that such a proposal made to our chief inhabitants (particularly in this city, where our chief inhabitants are often peers of the land) would be received in a manner very little to our own satisfaction, or to the advantage of the said collections.

Fourthly, The brief does will, require, and command the bishops, and all other dignitaries of the church, "That they make their contributions distinctly, to be returned in the several provinces to the several archbishops of the same."

Upon which we take leave to observe, that the terms of expression here are of the strongest kind, and in a point that may subject the said dignitaries (for we shall say nothing of the bishops) to great inconveniencies.

The said dignitaries are here willed, required, and commanded, to make their contributions distinctly: by which it should seem that they are

absolutely commanded to make contributions (for the word *distinctly* is but a circumstance) and may be understood not very agreeable to a voluntary, cheerful contribution. And therefore, if any bishop or dignitary should refuse to make his contribution (perhaps for very good reasons) he may be thought to incur the crime of disobedience to his majesty, which all good subjects abhor, when such a command is according to law.

Most dignities of this kingdom consist only of parochial tithes, and the dignitaries are ministers of parishes. A doubt may therefore arise, whether the said dignitaries are willed, required, and commanded, to make their contributions in both capacities, distinctly as dignitaries, and jointly as parsons or vicars.

Many dignities in this kingdom are the poorest kind of benefices; and it should seem hard to put poor dignitaries under the necessity either of making greater contributions than they can afford, or of exposing themselves to the censure of wanting charity, by making their contributions public.

Our Saviour commands us, in works of charity, to "let not our left hand know what our right hand doth;" which cannot well consist with our being willed, required, and commanded, by any earthly power, where no law is prescribed, to publish our charity to the world, if we have a mind to conceal it.

Fifthly, Whereas it is said, in the said brief, "That the parson, vicar, &c. of every parish, shall, in six days after the receipt of the said charity, return it to his respective chancellor, &c." This may be a great grievance, hazard, and expense, to the said parson, in remote and desolate parts of the country; where often an honest messenger (if such a one can be got) must

be hired to travel forty or fifty miles going and coming ; which will probably cost more than the value of the contribution he carries with him. And this charge, if briefs should happen to be frequent, would be enough to undo many a poor clergyman in the kingdom.

Sixthly, We observe in the said brief, that the provost and fellows of the university, judges, officers of the court, and professors of laws common and civil, are neither willed, required, nor commanded, to make their contributions ; but that so good a work is only recommended to them.—Whereas we conceive, that all his majesty's subjects are equally obliged, with or without his majesty's commands, to promote works of charity according to their power ; and that the clergy, in their ecclesiastical capacity, are only liable to such commands as the rubrick, or any other law, shall enjoin, being born to the same privileges of freedom with the rest of his majesty's subjects.

We cannot but observe to your grace, that, in the English act of the fourth year of queen Anne, for the better collecting charity money on briefs by letters patent, &c. the ministers are obliged only to read the briefs in their churches, without any particular exhortations ; neither are they commanded to go from house to house with the churchwardens, nor to send the money collected to their respective chancellors, but pay it to the undertaker or agent of the sufferer. So that, we humbly hope, the clergy of this kingdom shall not, without any law in being, be put to greater hardships in this case than their brethren in England ; where the legislature, intending to prevent the abuses in collecting charity money on briefs, did not think fit to put the clergy under any of those difficulties we now complain of in the present

brief by letters patent, for the relief of Charles M'Carthy aforesaid.

The collections upon the Lord's day are the principal support of our own numerous poor in our several parishes; and therefore every single brief, with the benefit of a full collection over the whole kingdom, must deprive several thousands of poor of their weekly maintenance, for the sake only of one person, who often becomes a sufferer by his own folly or negligence, and is sure to overvalue his losses double or treble: so that, if this precedent be followed, as it certainly will, if the present brief should succeed, we may probably have a new brief every week; and thus, for the advantage of fifty-two persons, whereof not one in ten is deserving, and for the interest of a dozen dexterous clerks and secretaries, the whole poor in the kingdom will be likely to starve.

We are credibly informed, that neither the officers of the lord primate in preparing the report of his grace's opinion, nor those of the great-seal in passing the patent for briefs, will remit any of their fees, both which do amount to a considerable sum: and thus the good intentions of well-disposed people are in a great measure disappointed, a large part of their charity being anticipated and alienated by fees and gratuities.

Lastly, We cannot but represent to your grace our great concern and grief, to see the pains and labour of our churchwardens so much increased, by the injunctions and commands put upon them in this brief, to the great disadvantage of the clergy and the people, as well as to their own trouble, damage, and loss of time; to which, great additions have been already made, by laws appointing them to collect the taxes for the watch

and the poor-house, which they bear with great unwillingness; and if they shall find themselves farther laden with such briefs as this of M'Carthy, it will prove so great a discouragement, that we shall never be able to provide honest and sufficient persons for that weighty office of churchwarden, so necessary to the laity as well as the clergy, in all things that relate to the order and regulation of parishes.

Upon all these considerations, we humbly hope that your grace, of whose fatherly care, vigilance, and tenderness, we have had so many and great instances, will represent the case to his most excellent majesty, or the chief governor in this kingdom, in such a manner, that we may be neither under the necessity of declining his majesty's commands in his letters patent, or of taking new and grievous burdens upon ourselves and our churchwardens, to which neither the rubrick, nor any other law in force, obliges us to submit.

END OF VOLUME EIGHTH.

EDINBURGH:

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