

it seems such a small circumstance of life, would in all probability be a means of great piety. It would keep it constantly in your head, that softness and idleness were to be avoided, that self-denial was a part of Christianity. It would teach you to exercise power over yourself, and make you able by degrees to renounce other pleasures and tempers that war against the soul.

This one rule would teach you to think of others; it would dispose your mind to exactness, and be very likely to bring the remaining part of the day, under rules of prudence and devotion.

But above all, one certain benefit from this method you will be sure of having, it will best fit and prepare you for the reception of the holy Spirit. When you thus begin the day in the spirit of religion, renouncing sleep, because you are to renounce softness, and redeem your time; this disposition, as it puts your heart into a good state, so it will procure the assistance of the holy Spirit; what is so planted and watered, will certainly have an increase from God. You will then speak from your heart, your soul will be awake, your prayers will refresh you like meat and drink, you will feel what you say, and begin to know what saints and holy men have meant, by fervours of devotion.

He that is thus prepared for prayer, who rises with these dispositions, is in a very different state from him, who has no rules of this
kind;

kind; who rises by chance, as he happens to be weary of his bed, or is able to sleep no longer. If such a one prays only with his mouth; if his heart feels nothing of that which he says; if his prayers are only things of course; if they are a lifeless form of words, which he only repeats because they are soon said, there is nothing to be wondred at in all this: for such dispositions are the natural effect of such a state of life.

Hoping therefore, that you are now enough convinced of the necessity of rising early to your prayers, I shall proceed to lay before you a method of daily prayer.

I don't take upon me to prescribe to you the use of any *particular forms* of prayer, but only to shew you the necessity of praying at such times, and in such a manner.

You will here find some helps, how to furnish yourself with such *forms* of prayer, as shall be useful to you. And if you are such a proficient in the spirit of devotion, that your heart is always ready to pray in its own language, in this case I press no necessity of borrow'd forms.

For tho' I think a form of prayer very *necessary* and *expedient* for *publick* worship, yet if any one can find a better way of raising his heart unto God in private, than by *prepared forms* of prayer, I have nothing to object against it; my design being only to assist and direct such as stand in need of assistance.

Thus much, I believe, is certain, that the *generality* of Christians ought to use *forms* of prayer, at all the regular times of prayer. It seems right for every one to begin with a *form* of prayer; and if in the midst of his devotions, he finds his heart ready to break forth into new and higher strains of devotion, he should leave his *form* for a while, and follow those fervours of his heart, till it again wants the assistance of his usual petitions.

This seems to be the *true liberty* of *private* devotion; it should be under the direction of some *form*; but not so ty'd down to it, but that it may be free to take such new expressions, as its present fervours happen to furnish it with; which sometimes are more affecting, and carry the soul more powerfully to God, than any expressions that were ever used before.

All people that have ever made any reflections upon what passes in their own hearts, must know that they are mighty changeable in regard to devotion. Sometimes our hearts are so *awaken'd*, have such *strong* apprehensions of the divine Presence, are so full of *deep* compunction for our sins, that we cannot confess them in any language, but that of *tears*.

Sometimes the light of God's countenance shines so bright upon us, we see so far into the invisible world, we are so affected with the wonders of the love and goodness of God, that our hearts worship and adore in a language
higher

higher than that of words, and we feel transports of devotion, which only can be felt.

On the other hand, sometimes we are so *sunk* into our bodies, so *dull* and *unaffected* with that which concerns our souls, that our hearts are as much too low for our prayers; we cannot keep pace with our *forms* of confession, or feel half of that in our hearts, which we have in our mouths; we thank and praise God with forms of words, but our hearts have little or no share in them.

It is therefore highly necessary, to provide against this *inconstancy* of our hearts, by having at hand such *forms* of prayer, as may best suit us when our hearts are in their *best* state, and also be most likely to raise and stir them up, when they are *sunk* into *dulness*. For as words have a power of affecting our hearts on all occasions, as the same thing differently expressed has different effects upon our minds; so it is reasonable, that we should make this advantage of language, and provide ourselves with such forms of expressions, as are most likely to move and enliven our souls, and fill them with sentiments suitable to them.

The first thing that you are to do, when you are upon your *knees*, is to shut your *eyes*, and with a short *silence* let your soul place it self in the presence of God; that is, you are to use this, or some other better method, to separate yourself from all common thoughts, and make your heart as sensible as you can of the divine presence.

Now if this recollection of spirit is necessary, as who can say it is not? then how poorly must they perform their devotions, who are always in a *hurry*; who begin them in haste, and hardly allow themselves time to repeat their very *form*, with any gravity or attention? Theirs is properly *saying* prayers, instead of *praying*.

To proceed; if you was to use yourself (as far as you can) to pray always in the *same* place; if you was to reserve that place for devotion, and not allow yourself to do any thing common in it; if you was never to be there yourself, but in times of devotion; if any *little room*, (or if that cannot be) if any particular *part* of a room was thus used, this kind of consecration of it, as a place *holy* unto God, would have an effect upon your mind, and dispose you to such tempers, as would very much assist your devotion. For by having a place thus sacred in your *room*, it would in some measure resemble a *chapel*, or *house* of God. This would dispose you to be always in the spirit of religion, when you was there; and fill you with *wise* and *holy* thoughts, when you was by yourself. Your own apartment would raise in your mind such sentiments, as you have, when you stand near an *altar*; and you would be afraid of thinking or doing any thing that was *foolish* near that place, which is the place of prayer, and holy intercourse with God.

When you begin your petitions, use such various expressions of the attributes of God, as may make you most sensible of the greatness and power of the divine Nature.

Begin therefore in words like these: *O Being of all beings, Fountain of all light and glory, gracious Father of men and angels, whose universal Spirit is every where present, giving life, and light, and joy, to all angels in heaven, and all creatures upon earth, &c.*

For these representations of the divine Attributes, which shew us in some degree the majesty and greatness of God, are an excellent means of raising our hearts into lively acts of worship and adoration.

What is the reason that most people are so much affected with this petition in the *Burial Service* of our Church: *Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death?* It is, because the joining together so many *great expressions*, gives such a description of the greatness of the Divine Majesty, as naturally affects every sensible mind.

Altho' therefore prayer does not consist in *fine words*, or *study'd expressions*; yet as words speak to the soul, as they have a certain power of raising thoughts in the soul; so those words which speak of God in the *highest* manner, which most *fully* express the power and presence of God, which raise thoughts in the soul most suitable to the greatness and providence

of God, are the most useful, and most edifying in our prayers.

When you direct any of your petitions to our blessed Lord, let it be in some expressions of this kind: *O Saviour of the world, God of God, Light of Light; thou that art the Brightness of thy Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person; thou that art the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and End of all things; thou that hast destroyed the power of the devil, that hast overcome death; thou that art entred into the Holy of Holies, that sittest at the right hand of the Father, that art high above all thrones and principalities, that makest intercession for all the world; thou that art the judge of the quick and dead; thou that wilt speedily come down in thy Father's glory, to reward all men according to their works, be thou my light and my peace, &c.*

For such representations, which describe so many *characters* of our Saviour's nature and power, are not only proper acts of *adoration*, but will, if they are repeated with any attention, fill our hearts with the highest fervours of true devotion.

Again, if you ask any particular grace of our blessed Lord, let it be in some manner like this:

O holy Jesus, Son of the most high God, thou that wast scourged at a pillar, stretched and nail'd upon a cross, for the sins of the world, unite me to thy cross, and fill my soul with thy holy, humble, and suffering spirit. O Fountain
of

of mercy, thou that didst save the thief upon the cross, save me from the guilt of a sinful life; thou that didst cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene, cast out of my heart all evil thoughts, and wicked tempers. O Giver of life, thou that didst raise Lazarus from the dead, raise up my soul from the death and darkness of sin. Thou that didst give to thy Apostles power over unclean spirits, give me power over my own heart. Thou that didst appear unto thy disciples when the doors were shut, do thou appear unto me in the secret apartment of my heart. Thou that didst cleanse the lepers, heal the sick, and give sight to the blind, cleanse my heart, heal the disorders of my soul, and fill me with heavenly light.

Now these kind of appeals have a double advantage; first, as they are so many proper acts of our *faith*, whereby we not only shew our belief of the *miracles* of Christ, but turn them at the same time into so many instances of worship and adoration.

Secondly, As they strengthen and increase the faith of our prayers, by presenting to our minds so many instances of that *power* and *goodness*, which we call upon for our own assistance.

For he that appeals to Christ, as casting out devils, and raising the *dead*, has then a powerful motive in his mind to pray earnestly, and depend faithfully upon his assistance.

Again; In order to fill your prayers with excellent strains of devotion, it may be of use to you to observe this farther rule:

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When at any time, either in reading the *Scripture*, or any book of *Piety*, you meet with a passage, that more than ordinarily affects your mind, and seems as it were to give your heart a new motion towards God, you should try to turn it into the *form* of a petition, and then give it a place in your prayers.

By this means, you would be often improving your prayers, and storing yourself with proper forms of making the desires of your heart known unto God.

At all the *stated hours* of prayer, it will be of great benefit to you, to have something *fix'd*, and something at *liberty*, in your devotions.

You should have some *fix'd* subject, which is constantly to be the chief matter of your prayer at that particular time; and yet have liberty to add such *other petitions*, as your condition may then require.

For instance; As the *morning* is to you the beginning of a new life; as God has then given you a new enjoyment of yourself, and a fresh entrance into the world, it is highly proper, that your *first* devotions should be a *praise* and thanksgiving to God, as for a new creation; and that you should offer and devote *body* and *soul*, all that you *are*, and all that you *have*, to his service and glory.

Receive therefore every day, as a *resurrection* from death, as a new enjoyment of life; meet every *rising sun* with such sentiments of God's goodness, as if you had seen *it*, and all things,

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new created upon your account; and under the sense of so great a blessing, let your joyful heart praise and magnify so good and glorious a Creator.

Let therefore *praise* and *thanksgiving*, and *oblation* of yourself unto God, be always the *fixed* and *certain* subject of your *first* prayers in the morning; and then take the liberty of adding such other devotions, as the *accidental* difference of your *state*, or the *accidental* difference of your *heart*, shall then make most needful and expedient for you.

For one of the greatest benefits of *private* devotion, consists in rightly adapting our prayers to these two conditions, the difference of our *state*, and the difference of our *hearts*.

By the difference of our *state*, is meant the difference of our *external state* or condition, as of *sickness*, *health*, *pains*, *losses*, *disappointments*, *troubles*, particular *mercies* or *judgments* from God; all sorts of *kindnesses*, *injuries* or *reproaches* from other people.

Now as these are great parts of our state of life, as they make great difference in it, by continually changing; so our devotion will be made doubly beneficial to us, when it watches to receive and sanctify all these *changes* of our state, and turns them all into so many occasions of a more particular application to God, of such thanksgivings, such resignation, such petitions, as our present state more especially requires.

And

And he that makes every change in his state, a reason of presenting unto God some particular petitions suitable to that change, will soon find, that he has taken an excellent means, not only of *praying* with fervour, but of *living* as he prays.

The next condition, to which we are always to adapt some part of our prayers, is the *difference* of our *hearts*; by which is meant the different state of the tempers of our hearts, as of *love, joy, peace, tranquility*; *dulness* and *dri-ness* of *spirit, anxiety, discontent, motions* of *envy* and *ambition, dark and disconsolate thoughts, resentments, fretfulness, and peevish tempers.*

Now as these tempers, through the weakness of our nature, will have their succession more or less, even in pious minds; so we should constantly make the *present state* of our heart, the reason of some particular application to God.

If we are in the delightful calm of sweet and easy passions, of *love* and *joy* in God, we should then offer the grateful tribute of thanksgiving to God, for the possession of so much happiness, thankfully owning and acknowledging him as the bountiful Giver of it all.

If on the other hand, we feel ourselves laden with *heavy* passions, with *dulness* of spirit, *anxiety* and *uneasiness*, we must then look up to God in acts of humility, confessing our unworthiness, opening our troubles to him, beseeching him in his good time to lessen the weight of our infirmities, and to deliver us
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from such passions as oppose the purity and perfection of our souls.

Now by thus watching, and attending to the present state of our hearts, and suiting some of our petitions exactly to their wants, we shall not only be well acquainted with the disorders of our souls, but also be well exercis'd in the method of curing them.

By this prudent and wise application of our prayers, we shall get all the relief from them that is possible; and the very *changeableness* of our hearts, will prove a means of exercising a greater variety of holy tempers.

Now by all that has here been said, you will easily perceive, that persons careful of the greatest benefit of prayer, ought to have a great share in the forming and composing their own devotions.

As to that part of their prayers, which is always fix'd to one certain subject, in that they may use the help of forms compos'd by other persons; but in that part of their prayers, which they are always to suit to the present *state* of their *life*, and the *present* state of their *heart*, there they must let the sense of their own condition help them to such kinds of *petition*, *thanksgiving*, or *resignation*, as their present state more especially requires.

Happy are they, who have this business and employment upon their hands!

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And now, if people of leisure, whether men, or women, who are so much at a loss how to dispose of their time, who are forc'd into poor contrivances, idle visits, and ridiculous diversions, merely to get rid of hours that hang heavily upon their hands; if such were to appoint some certain spaces of their time, to the study of devotion, searching after all the means and helps to attain a devout spirit. If they were to collect the best *forms* of devotion, to use themselves to transcribe the finest passages of *scripture-prayers*; if they were to collect the devotions, confessions, petitions, praises, resignations, and thank-givings, which are scattered up and down in the Psalms, and range them under proper heads, as so much proper fuel for the flame of their own devotion. If their minds were often thus employ'd, sometimes meditating upon them, sometimes getting them by heart, and making them as habitual as their own thoughts, how fervently would they pray, who came thus prepar'd to prayer?

And how much better would it be, to make this benefit of *leisure-time*, than to be *jolly* and *idly* lost in the poor impertinencies of a *playing, visiting, wandering* life?

How much better would it be, to be thus furnish'd with hymns and anthems of the saints, and teach their souls to ascend to God; than to *corrupt, bewilder* and *confound* their hearts, with the *wild fancies*, the *lustful* thoughts of lewd Poets?

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Now though people of leisure seem call'd more particularly to this study of devotion, yet persons of much business or labour, must not think themselves excus'd from this, or some better method of improving their devotion.

For the greater their business is, the more need they have of some such method as this, to prevent its power over their hearts; to secure them from sinking into worldly tempers, and preserve a sense and taste of heavenly things in their minds. And a little time *regularly* and *constantly* employ'd to any one *use* or *end*, will do great things, and produce mighty effects.

And it is for want of considering devotion in this *light*, as something that is to be nurs'd and cherish'd with care, as something that is to be made part of our business, that is to be improv'd with care and contrivance, by art and method, and a diligent use of the best helps; it is for want of considering it in this light, that so many people are so little benefited by it, and live and die strangers to that spirit of devotion, which by a prudent use of proper means, they might have enjoy'd in a high degree.

For though the spirit of devotion is the gift of God, and not attainable by any *mere* power of our own, yet is it mostly given, and *never withheld*, from those, who by a wise and diligent use of proper means, prepare themselves for the reception of it.

And it is amazing to see, how eagerly men employ their *parts*, their *sagacity*, *time*, *study*, *application* and *exercise*; how all helps are call'd to their assistance, when any thing is intended and desir'd in worldly matters; and how *dull*, *negligent*, and unimprov'd they are, how little they use their *parts*, *sagacity*, and abilities, to raise and increase their devotion!

Mundanus is a man of excellent parts, and clear apprehension. He is well advanc'd in age, and has made a great figure in business. Every part of *trade* and business that has fallen in his way, has had some improvement from him; and he is always contriving to carry every method of doing any thing well, to its greatest height. *Mundanus* aims at the greatest perfection in every thing. The *soundness* and *strength* of his mind, and his just way of thinking upon things, makes him intent upon removing all imperfections.

He can tell you all the defects and errors in all the common methods, whether of *trade*, *building*, or improving *land*, or *manufactures*. The clearness and strength of his understanding, which he is constantly improving, by continual exercise in these matters, by often digesting his thoughts in writing, and trying every thing every way, has render'd him a great master of most concerns in human life.

Thus has *Mundanus* gone on, increasing his *knowledge* and *judgment*, as fast as his years came upon him.

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The one only thing which has not fallen under his improvement, nor receiv'd any benefit from his judicious mind, is his *devotion*: This is just in the same *poor* state it was, when he was only six years of age; and the *old man* prays now, in that little form of words, which his mother us'd to hear him repeat night and morning.

This *Mundanus*, that hardly ever saw the poorest *utensil*, or ever took the meanest *trifle* into his hand, without considering how it might be *made*, or *us'd* to better advantage, has gone all his life long praying in the same manner, as when he was a *child*; without ever considering how much *better*, or *oftner* he might pray; without considering how improveable the spirit of devotion is, how many helps a wise and reasonable man may call to his assistance, and how necessary it is, that our prayers should be enlarg'd, vary'd, and suited to the particular state and condition of our lives.

If *Mundanus* sees a book of *devotion*, he passes it by, as he does a *spelling-book*, because he remembers that he learn'd to *pray* so many years ago under his *mother*, when he learnt to *spell*.

Now how poor and pitiable is the conduct of this man of sense, who has so much judgment and understanding in every thing, but that which is the *whole wisdom* of man?

And how miserably do many people, more or less imitate this conduct?

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All which seems to be owing to a strange infatuated state of negligence, which keeps people from considering what *devotion* is. For if they did but once proceed so far, as to *reflect* about it, or ask themselves any questions concerning it, they would soon see, that the spirit of *devotion* was like any other *sense* or *understanding*, that is only to be improv'd by *study, care, application*, and the *use* of such *means* and *helps*, as are necessary to make a man a proficient in any art, or science.

Classicus is a man of learning, and well vers'd in all the best authors of antiquity. He has read them so much, that he has enter'd into their spirit, and can very ingeniously imitate the manner of any of them. All their thoughts are his thoughts, and he can express himself in their language. He is so great a friend to this improvement of the mind, that if he lights of a young scholar, he never fails to advise him concerning his studies.

Classicus tells his young man, he must not think that he has done enough, when he has only learnt *languages*; but that he must be daily conversant with the best authors, read them again and again, catch their spirit by living with them, and that there is no other way of becoming like them, or of making himself a man of *taste* and *judgment*.

How wise might *Classicus* have been, and how much good might he have done in
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the world, if he had but thought as *justly* of devotion, as he does of *learning*?

He never, indeed, says any thing *shocking* or *offensive* about devotion, because he never *thinks*, or *talks* about it. It suffers nothing from him, but neglect and disregard.

The two Testaments would not have had so much as a place amongst his Books, but that they are both to be had in *Greek*.

Classicus thinks that he sufficiently shews his regard for the holy Scripture, when he tells you, that he has no other Books of piety besides them.

It is very well, *Classicus*, that you prefer the Bible to all other Books of piety; he has no judgment, that is not thus far of your opinion.

But if you will have no other book of piety besides the *Bible*, because it is the best, How comes it, *Classicus*, that you don't content your self with *one* of the *best* Books amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans*? How comes it that you are so greedy and eager after *all* of them? How comes it that you think the knowledge of one is a necessary help to the knowledge of the other? How comes it that you are so earnest, so laborious, so expensive of your time and money, to restore *broken periods*, and *scraps* of the ancients?

How comes it that you read so many *Commentators* upon *Cicero*, *Horace*, and *Homer*, and not one upon the Gospel? How comes it that you love to read a man? How comes it

that your love of *Cicero*, and *Ovid*, makes you love to read an *author* that writes like them; and yet your *esteem* for the *Gospel* gives you no desire, nay, prevents your reading such Books, as breathe the very spirit of the Gospel?

How comes it that you tell your *young scholar*, he must not content himself with barely understanding his authors, but must be continually reading them *all*, as the only means of entering into their spirit, and forming his own judgment according to them?

Why then must the Bible lye alone in your study? Is not the spirit of the saints, the piety of the holy followers of Jesus Christ, as good and necessary a means of entering into the spirit and *taste* of the Gospel, as the reading of the antients is of entering into the spirit of antiquity?

Is the spirit of poetry only to be got by much reading of Poets and Orators? And is not the spirit of devotion to be got in the same way, by frequent reading the holy thoughts, and pious strains of devout men?

Is your young Poet to search after *every line*, that may give new wings to his fancy, or direct his imagination? And is it not as reasonable for him, who desires to improve in the divine life, that is, in the love of heavenly things, to search after every strain of devotion, that may move, kindle, and inflame the holy ardour of his soul?

Do you advise your *Orator* to translate the best Orations, to commit much of them to memory, to be frequently exercising his talent in this manner, that habits of thinking and speaking justly may be form'd in his mind? And is there not the same benefit and advantage to be made by books of devotion? Should not a man use them in the same way, that habits of devotion, and aspiring to God in holy thoughts, may be well form'd in his soul?

Now the reason why *Classicus* does not *think* and *judge* thus reasonably of devotion, is owing to his never thinking of it in any other manner, than as the repeating a *form of words*. It never in his life enter'd into his head, to think of devotion as a *state of the heart*, as an *improveable talent* of the mind, as a *temper* that is to *grow* and *increase* like our *reason* and *judgment*, and to be form'd in us by such a regular diligent use of proper means, as are necessary to form any other wise habit of mind.

And it is for want of this, that he has been content all his life, with the *bare letter* of Prayer, and eagerly bent upon entering into the *spirit* of *heathen poets* and *orators*.

And it is much to be lamented, that numbers of *scholars* are *more* or *less* chargeable with this excessive folly; so negligent of improving their devotion, and so desirous of other poor accomplishments, as if they thought it a nobler talent, to be able to write an *epigram* in the *turn* of *Martial*, than to *live*,

and *think*, and *pray* to God, in the spirit of St. *Austin*.

And yet, to correct this temper, and fill a man with a quite contrary spirit, there seems to be no more requir'd, than the *bare* belief of the truth of Christianity.

And if you was to ask *Mundanus*, and *Classicus*, or any man of business, or learning, whether *piety* is not the highest perfection of man, or *devotion* the greatest attainment in the world, they must both be forced to answer in the affirmative, or else give up the truth of the Gospel.

For to set any accomplishment against devotion, or to think any thing, or all things in the world, bears any proportion to its excellency; is the same absurdity in a Christian, as it would be in a *Philosopher* to prefer a *meals meat*, to the greatest improvement in knowledge.

For as *Philosophy* professes purely the search and enquiry after knowledge, so *Christianity* supposes, intends, desires and aims at nothing else, but the raising fallen man to a divine life, to such habits of holiness, such degrees of devotion, as may fit him to enter amongst the holy inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven.

He that does not believe this of Christianity, may be reckon'd an infidel; and he that believes thus much, has *faith* enough to give him a right *judgment* of the *value* of things, to support him in a *sound mind*, and enable him

him to conquer all the temptations which the world shall lay in his way.

To conclude this Chapter. Devotion is nothing else, but *right apprehensions*, and *right affections* towards God.

All practices therefore that heighten and improve our true apprehensions of God, all ways of life that tend to *nourish*, *raise*, and fix our affections upon him, are to be reckon'd so many helps and means to fill us with devotion.

As *Prayer* is the proper fuel of this holy flame, so we must use all our care and contrivance to give prayer its full power; as by *alms*, *self-denial*, frequent *retirements*, and *holy readings*, composing *forms* for our selves, or using the *best* we can get, adding *length* of time, and observing *hours* of Prayer; *changing*, *improving*, and *suiting* our devotions to the condition of our lives, and the state of our hearts.

Those who have most leisure, seem more especially call'd to a more eminent observance of these holy rules of a devout life. And they who by the necessity of their state, and not through their own choice, have but little time to employ thus, must make the best use of that little they have.

For this is the certain way of making devotion produce a devout life.

C H A P. XV.

Of chanting, or singing of Psalms in our private devotions. Of the excellency and benefit of this kind of devotion. Of the great effects it hath upon our hearts. Of the means of performing it in the best manner.

YOU have seen in the foregoing Chapter, what means and methods you are to use, to raise and improve your devotion. How *early* you are to begin your prayers, and what is to be the *subject* of your *first devotions* in the morning.

There is one thing still remaining, that you must be requir'd to observe, not only as fit and proper to be done, but as such as cannot be neglected, without great prejudice to your devotions. And that is, to begin all your Prayers with a *Psalm*.

This is so right, is so beneficial to devotion, has so much *effect* upon our hearts, that it may be insisted upon as a *common* rule for all persons.

I don't mean, that you should *read* over a Psalm, but that you should *chant* or *sing* one of those Psalms, which we commonly call the *reading Psalms*. For *singing* is as much the *proper* use of a Psalm, as *devout supplication* is the *proper* use of a *form* of Prayer. And a
Psalm

Pfalm only *read*, is very much like a Prayer that is only *look'd* over.

Now the method of *chanting* a Pfalm, such as is us'd in the Colleges in the *Universities*, and in some *Churches*, is such as all persons are capable of. The change of the voice in thus *chanting* of a Pfalm is so small and natural, that every body is able to do it, and yet sufficient to raise and keep up the gladness of our hearts.

You are therefore to consider this *chanting* of a Pfalm, as a necessary beginning of your devotions, as something that is to *awaken* all that is *good* and *holy* within you, that is to call your *spirits* to their proper duty, to set you in your best *posture* towards heaven, and tune all the powers of your soul to worship and adoration.

For there is nothing that so clears a way for your prayers, nothing that so disperses *dulness* of heart, nothing that so purifies the soul from *poor* and *little* passions, nothing that so *opens* heaven, or carries your heart so near it, as these *songs* of *praise*.

They create a sense and delight in God, they awaken holy desires, they teach you how to ask, and they prevail with God to give. They kindle an *holy* flame, they turn your heart into an *altar*, your prayers into *incense*, and carry them as a sweet-smelling favour to the throne of Grace.

The difference between singing and reading a Pfalm, will easily be understood, if you

consider the difference between reading and singing a *common song* that you like. Whilst you only read it, you only *like* it, and that is all; but as soon as you *sing* it, then you enjoy it, you feel the delight of it, it has got hold of you, your passions keep pace with it, and you feel the *same spirit* within you, that there seems to be in the words.

If you was to tell a person that has such a song, that he need not *sing* it, that it was sufficient to *peruse* it; he would wonder what you mean; and would think you as absurd, as if you was to tell him, that he should only *look* at his *food*, to see whether it was good, but need not *eat* it: For a song of praise not sung, is very like any other good thing not made *use* of.

You will perhaps say, that singing is a *particular talent*, that belongs only to particular people, and that you have neither *voice* nor *ear* to make any musick.

If you had said that singing is a *general talent*, and that people differ in that as they do in all other things, you had said something much truer.

For how vastly do people differ in the talent of *thinking*, which is not only common to all men, but seems to be the very essence of human nature? How readily do some people reason upon every thing? and how hardly do others reason upon any thing? How clearly do some people discourse upon the most ab-
struse

struse matters? and how confusedly do others talk upon the plainest subjects?

Yet no one desires to be excused from *thought*, or *reason*, or *discourse*, because he has not these *talents* as some people have them. But it is full as just, for a person to think himself excused from *thinking* upon God, from *reasoning* about his duty to him, or *discourfing* about the means of falvation, because he has not these talents in any *fine degree*; this is full as just, as for a person to think himself excused from finging the praifes of God, because he has not a fine *ear*, or a musical *voice*.

For as it is *fpeaking*, and not *graceful fpeaking*, that is a requir'd part of prayer; as it is *bowing*, and not *genteel bowing*, that is a proper part of adoration; fo it is *finging*, and not *artful fine finging*, that is a requir'd way of praifing God.

If a person was to forbear praying, because he had an *odd tone* in his voice; he would have as good an excufe as he has, that forbears from *finging* Pfalms, because he has but little management of his voice. And as a man's fpeaking his prayers, tho' in an odd tone, may yet fufficiently anfwer all the ends of his own devotion; fo a man's finging of a Pfalm, tho' not in a very musical way, may yet fufficiently anfwer all the ends of rejoycing in, and praifing God.

Secondly, This objection might be of fome weight, if you was defired to fing, to entertain

tain other people; but is not to be admitted in the present case; where you are only required to sing the praises of God, as a part of your own private devotion.

If a person that has a very ill voice, and a bad way of speaking, was desir'd to be the mouth of a congregation, it would be a very proper excuse for him, to say that he had not a voice, or a way of speaking that was proper for prayer. But he would be very absurd, if for the same reason he should neglect his own private devotions.

Now this is exactly the case of singing Psalms; you may not have the talent of singing, so as to be able to entertain other people, and therefore it is reasonable to excuse yourself from it; but if for that reason you should excuse yourself from this way of praising God, you would be guilty of a great absurdity: Because singing is no more requir'd for the musick that is made by it, than prayer is requir'd for the fine words that it contains, but as it is the natural and proper expression of a heart rejoicing in God.

Our blessed Saviour and his apostles sung an hymn; but it may reasonably be supposed, that they rather *rejoiced* in God, than made *fine* musick.

Do but so live, that your heart may truly rejoice in God, that it may feel itself affected with the praises of God, and then you will find, that this state of your heart will neither want a voice, nor ear, to find a tune for a
Psalm;

Pfalm. Every one at some time or other finds himself able to sing in some degree; there are some times and occasions of joy, that make all people ready to express their sense of it in some sort of harmony. The joy that they feel, forces them to let their voice have a part in it.

He therefore that saith he wants a voice, or an ear, to sing a Pfalm, mistakes the case; he wants that *spirit* that really rejoices in God; the dulness is in his *heart*, and not in his *ear*; and when his heart feels a true joy in God, when it has a full relish of what is expressed in the Psalms, he will find it very pleasant, to make the motions of his voice express the motions of his heart.

Singing indeed, as it is improv'd into an art, as it signifies the running of the voice thro' such or such a compass of notes, and keeping time with a study'd variety of changes, is not natural, nor the effect of any natural state of the mind; so in this sense, it is not *common* to all people, any more than those *antick* and *invented* motions which make *fine dancing*, are common to all people.

But singing, as it signifies a motion of the voice suitable to the motions of the heart, and the changing of its tone according to the meaning of the words which we utter, is as natural and common to all men, as it is to speak *high* when they *threaten* in anger, or to speak *low* when they are *dejected* and ask for a *pardon*.

All men therefore are fingers, in the same manner as all men *think, speak, laugh, and lament*. For singing is no more an invention, than *grief* or *joy* are inventions.

Every state of the heart naturally puts the body into some state that is suitable to it, and is proper to shew it to other people. If a man is *angry, or disdainful*, no one need instruct him how to express these passions by the *tone* of his voice. The *state* of his heart disposes him to a *proper* use of his voice.

If therefore there are but *few* fingers of *divine* songs, if people want to be *exhorted* to this *part* of devotion; it is because there are but few, whose hearts are *raised* to that *height* of piety, as to feel any motions of *joy* and *delight* in the praises of God.

Imagine to yourself, that you had been with *Moses* when he was led thro' the *Red Sea*; that you had seen the waters divide themselves, and stand on an heap on both sides; that you had seen them held up till you had pass'd thro', then let fall upon your enemies; do you think that you should then have wanted a *voice* or an *ear* to have sung with *Moses*, *The Lord is my strength, and my song, and he is become my salvation, &c.*? I know, your own heart tells you, that all people must have been fingers upon such an occasion. Let this therefore teach you, that it is the heart that tunes a voice to sing the praises of God; and that if you can't sing these same words now with joy, it is because you are not so affected

fectcd with the falvation of the world by Jeſus Chriſt, as the *Jews* were, or you yourſelf would have been, with their deliverance at the *Red ſea*.

That it is the ſtate of the heart that diſpoſes us to rejoyce in any particular kind of ſinging, may be eaſily proved from variety of obſervations upon human nature. An old *debauchee* may, according to the language of the world, have neither *voice* nor *ear*, if you only ſing a *Pſalm*, or a ſong in praiſe of *virtue* to him; but yet if in ſome *eaſy tune* you ſing ſomething that celebrates his *former debauches*, he will then, tho' he has no *teeth* in his head, ſhew you, that he has both a *voice* and an *ear* to join in ſuch muſick. You then awaken his heart, and he as *naturally* ſings to ſuch words, as he laughs when he is pleas'd. And this will be the caſe in every ſong that touches the heart; if you celebrate the ruling paſſion of any man's heart, you put his voice in tune to join with you.

Thus if you can find a man, whoſe *ruling temper* is devotion, whoſe heart is full of God, his voice will rejoyce in thoſe ſongs of praiſe, which glorify that God, that is the joy of his heart, tho' he has neither voice nor ear for other muſick. Would you therefore delightfully perform this part of devotion, it is not ſo neceſſary to learn a *tune*, or praſtiſe upon *notes*, as to prepare your heart; for, as our bleſſed Lord ſaith, out of the heart proceed *evil thoughts, murders, &c.* ſo it is equally true,

trac, that out of the heart proceed *holy joys, thanksgiving and praise*. If you can once say with *David, My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed*; it will be very easy and natural to add, as he did, *I will sing and give praise, &c.*

Secondly, Let us now consider another reason for this kind of devotion. As singing is a natural *effect* of joy in the heart, so it has also a natural power of rendering the heart joyful.

The soul and body are so united, that they have each of them power over one another in their actions. Certain thoughts and sentiments in the soul, produce such and such motions or actions in the body; and on the other hand, certain motions and actions of the body, have the same power of raising such and such thoughts and sentiments in the soul. So that as singing is the natural *effect* of joy in the mind, so it is as truly a natural *cause* of raising joy in the mind.

As devotion of the heart naturally breaks out into outward acts of prayer, so outward acts of prayer are natural means of raising the devotion of the heart.

It is thus in all states and tempers of the mind; as the inward state of the mind produces outward actions suitable to it, so those outward actions have the like power of raising an inward state of mind suitable to them.

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As *anger* produces angry words, so angry words increase anger.

So that if we barely consider human nature, we shall find, that *singing* or *chanting* the Psalms, is as proper and necessary to raise our hearts to a delight in God, as prayer is proper and necessary to excite in us the spirit of devotion. Every reason for one, is in all respects as strong a reason for the other.

If therefore you would know the reason and necessity of singing Psalms, you must consider the reason and necessity of praising and rejoicing in God; because singing of Psalms is as much the true exercise and support of this spirit of thanksgiving, as prayer is the true exercise and support of the spirit of devotion. And you may as well think, that you can be devout as you ought, without the use of prayer, as that you can rejoice in God as you ought, without the practice of singing of Psalms. Because this singing is as much the *natural language* of praise and thanksgiving, as prayer is the natural language of devotion.

The union of soul and body is not a mixture of their substances, as we see bodies united and mix'd together, but consists solely in the mutual power that they have of acting upon one another.

If two persons were in such a state of dependence upon one another, that neither of them could act, or move, or think, or feel, or suffer, or desire any thing, without putting

the other into the same condition, one might properly say, that they were in a state of strict union, although their substances were not united together.

Now this is the union of the soul and body; the substance of the one cannot be mix'd, or united with the other; but they are held together in such a state of union, that all the actions and sufferings of the one, are at the same time the actions and sufferings of the other. The soul has no thought or passion, but the body is concern'd in it; the body has no action or motion, but what in some degree affects the soul.

Now as it is the sole will of God, that is the *reason* and *cause* of all the powers and effects which you see in the world; as the *Sun* gives light and heat, not because it has any natural power of so doing; as it is fix'd in a certain place, and other bodies moving about it; not because it is in the nature of the Sun to stand still, and in the nature of other bodies to move about it; but merely because it is the *will* of God, that they should be in such a state. As the *eye* is the organ, or instrument of seeing, not because the *skins*, and *coats*, and *humours* of the eye, have a natural power of giving sight: As the ears are the organs, or instruments of hearing; not because the *make* of the ear has any natural power over sounds, but merely because it is the will of God, that *seeing* and *hearing* should be thus receiv'd: So in like manner it

is the sole will of God, and not the nature of a human soul or body, that is the cause of this union betwixt the soul and the body.

Now if you rightly apprehend this short account of the union of the soul and body, you will see a great deal into the reason and necessity of all the outward parts of Religion.

This union of our souls and bodies, is the reason both why we have so little and so much power over our selves. It is owing to this union, that we have so little power over our souls; for as we cannot prevent the effects of external objects upon our bodies, as we cannot command outward causes, so we cannot always command the inward state of our minds; because, as outward objects act upon our bodies without our leave, so our bodies act upon our minds by the laws of the union of the soul and the body: And thus you see it is owing to this union, that we have so *little* power over our selves.

On the other hand, it is owing to this union, that we have so *much* power over our selves. For as our souls in a great measure depend upon our bodies; and as we have great power over our bodies, as we can command our outward actions, and oblige our selves to such habits of life, as naturally produce habits in the soul; as we can mortify our bodies, and remove our selves from objects that

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in flame

in flame our passions; so we have a great power over the *inward* state of our souls. Again, as we are masters of our outward actions; as we can force our selves to outward acts of reading, praying, singing, and the like; and as all these bodily actions have an effect upon the soul, as they naturally tend to form such and such tempers in our hearts; so by being masters of these outward, bodily actions, we have great power over the inward state of the heart.

And thus it is owing to this union, that we have so much power over our selves.

Now from this you may also see the necessity and benefit of singing Psalms, and of all the outward acts of Religion; for if the body has so much power over the soul, it is certain that all such bodily actions as affect the soul, are of great weight in Religion. Not as if there was any true worship, or piety in the actions themselves, but because they are proper to raise and support that *Spirit*, which is the true worship of God.

Though therefore the seat of Religion is in the heart, yet since our bodies have a power over our hearts, since outward actions both proceed from, and enter into the heart, it is plain, that outward actions have a great power over that Religion which is seated in the heart.

We are therefore as well to use outward helps, as inward meditation, in order to beget and fix habits of piety in our hearts.

This

This doctrine may easily be carry'd too far; for by calling in too many outward means of worship, it may degenerate into superstition: as on the other hand, some have fallen into the contrary extreme. For because Religion is justly plac'd in the heart, some have pursued that notion so far, as to renounce vocal prayer, and other outward acts of worship, and have resolv'd all Religion into a *quietism*, or *mystic* intercourses with God in silence.

Now these are two *extremes* equally prejudicial to true Religion; and ought not to be objected either against internal, or external worship. As you ought not to say, that I encourage that *quietism*, by placing religion in the heart; so neither ought you to say, that I encourage superstition, by shewing the benefit of outward acts of worship.

For since we are neither *all soul*, nor *all body*; seeing none of our actions are either separately of the soul, or separately of the body; seeing we have no habits but such as are produced by the actions both of our souls and bodies; it is certain, that if we would arrive at habits of devotion, or delight in God, we must not only meditate and exercise our souls, but we must practise and exercise our bodies to all such outward actions, as are conformable to these inward tempers.

If we would truly prostrate our souls before God, we must use our bodies to postures of lowliness; if we desire true fervours of devo-

tion, we must make prayer the frequent labour of our lips. If we would banish all pride and passion from our hearts, we must force our selves to all outward actions of patience and meekness. If we would feel inward motions of joy and delight in God, we must practise all the outward acts of it, and make our voices call upon our hearts.

Now therefore, you may plainly see the reason and necessity of *singing of Psalms*; it is because outward actions are necessary to support inward tempers; and therefore the outward act of joy is necessary to raise and support the inward joy of the mind.

If any people were to leave off prayer, because they seldom find the motions of their hearts answering the words which they speak, you would charge them with great absurdity. You would think it very reasonable, that they should continue their prayers, and be strict in observing all times of prayer, as the most likely means of removing the dulness and indevotion of their hearts.

Now this is very much the case as to singing of Psalms; people often sing without finding any inward joy suitable to the words which they speak; therefore they are careless of it, or wholly neglect it; not considering, that they act as absurdly, as he that should neglect prayer, because his heart was not enough affected with it. For it is certain, that this singing is as much the natural means
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of raising motions of joy in the mind, as prayer is the natural means of raising devotion.

I have been the longer upon this head, because of its great importance to true religion. For there is no state of mind so holy, so excellent, and so truly perfect, as that of *thankfulness* to God; and consequently nothing is of more importance in Religion, than that which exercises and improves this habit of mind.

A *dull, uneasy, complaining* spirit, which is sometimes the spirit of those that seem careful of Religion, is yet of all tempers the most contrary to Religion, for it disowns that God which it pretends to adore. For he sufficiently disowns God, who does not adore him as a Being of infinite goodness.

If a man does not believe that all the world is as God's family, where nothing happens by chance, but all is guided and directed by the care and providence of a Being that is all love and goodness to all his creatures; if a man do not believe this from his heart, he cannot be said truly to believe in God. And yet he that has this faith, has faith enough to overcome the world, and always be thankful to God. For he that believes that every thing happens to him for the *best*, cannot possibly complain for the want of something that is *better*.

If therefore you live in murmurings and complaints, accusing all the accidents of life,

it is not because you are a weak, infirm creature, but it is because you want the first principle of Religion, a right belief in God. For as thankfulness is an express acknowledgment of the goodness of God towards you, so repinings and complaints are as plain accusations of God's want of goodness towards you.

On the other hand, would you know who is the greatest Saint in the world? It is not he who *prays* most, or *fasts* most; it is not he who gives most *alms*, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity or justice; but it is he who is *always thankful* to God, who *wills* every thing that God *willeth*, who receives every thing as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it.

All prayer and devotion, fastings and repentance, meditation and retirement, all sacraments and ordinances, are but so many means to render the soul thus divine, and conformable to the will of God, and to fill it with thankfulness and praise for every thing that comes from God. This is the perfection of all virtues; and all virtues that do not tend to it, or proceed from it, are but so many false ornaments of a soul not converted unto God.

You need not therefore now wonder, that I lay so much stress upon singing a Psalm at all your devotions, since you see it is to form your spirit to such joy and thankfulness

to God, as is the highest perfection of a divine and holy life.

If any one would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness, and all perfection, he must tell you to make it a *rule* to your self, to *thank and praise God for every thing that happens to you*. For it is certain, that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing. Could you therefore work miracles, you could not do more for your self, than by this *thankful spirit*, for it *heals* with a word speaking, and turns all that it touches into happiness.

If therefore you would be so true to your eternal interest, as to propose this *thankfulness* as the end of all your Religion; if you would but settle it in your mind, that this was the state that you was to aim at by all your devotions, you would then have something plain and visible to walk by in all your actions, you would then easily see the effect of your virtues, and might safely judge of your improvement in piety. For so far as you renounce all selfish tempers, and motions of your own will, and seek for no other happiness, but in the thankful reception of every thing that happens to you, so far you may be safely reckon'd to have advanc'd in piety.

And altho' this be the highest temper that you can aim at, tho' it be the noblest sacrifice that the greatest saint can offer unto God, yet is it not ty'd to any *time*, or *place*, or *great*

occasion, but is always in your power, and may be the exercise of every day. For the *common events* of every day are sufficient to discover and exercise this temper, and may plainly shew you how far you are govern'd in all your actions by this thankful spirit.

And for this reason I exhort you to this method in your devotion, that every day may be made a day of thanksgiving, and that the spirit of murmur and discontent may be unable to enter into the heart, which is so often employ'd in singing the praises of God.

It may perhaps after all be objected, that although the great benefit, and excellent effects of this practice are very apparent, yet it seems not altogether so fit for *private* devotions; since it can hardly be perform'd without making our devotions publick to other people, and seems also liable to the charge of *sounding a trumpet* at our prayers.

It is therefore answer'd, *First*, That great numbers of People have it in their power to be as private as they please; such persons therefore are excluded from this excuse, which however it may be so to others, is none to them. Therefore let such take the benefit of this excellent devotion.

Secondly, Numbers of people are by the *necessity* of their state, as *servants, apprentices, prisoners, and families* in small houses, forc'd to be continually in the presence, or sight of somebody or other.

Now

Now are such persons to neglect their prayers, because they cannot pray without being seen? Are they not rather oblig'd to be more exact in them, that others may not be witnesses of their neglect, and so corrupted by their example?

Now what is here said of devotion, may surely be said of this *chanting a Psalm*, which is only a part of devotion.

The rule is this; Don't pray that you *may be seen* of men, but if your *confinement* obliges you to be always in the sight of others, be more afraid of being seen to *neglect*, than of being seen to have *recourse* to prayer.

Thirdly, The short of the matter is this. Either people can use such privacy in this practice, as to have no hearers, or they cannot. If they can, then this objection vanishes as to them: And if they cannot, they should consider their *confinement*, and the *necessities* of their state, as the confinement of a *prison*; and then they have an excellent *pattern* to follow, they may imitate St. *Paul* and *Silas*, who *sang praises to God in prison*, though we are expressly told, that the *prisoners heard them*. They therefore did not refrain from this kind of devotion for fear of being heard by others. If therefore any one is in the same necessity, either in *prison* or out of prison, what can he do better, than to follow this example?

I cannot pass by this place of Scripture, without desiring the pious reader to observe,
how

how strongly we are here call'd upon to this use of Psalms, and what a mighty recommendation of it, the practice of these two great *Saints* is.

In this their great distress, in *prison*, in *chains*, under the soreness of *stripes*, in the horror of *night*, the *divinest*, *holiest* thing they could do, was to *sing praises unto God*.

And shall we after this, need any exhortation to this holy practice? Shall we let the *day* pass without such thanksgivings, as they would not neglect in the *night*? Shall a *prison*, *chains*, and *darkness*, furnish them with songs of praise, and shall we have no singings in our *closets*?

Farther, let it also be observ'd, that while these two holy men were thus employ'd in the most exalted part of devotion, doing that
Acts xvi. 26. on *earth*, which *Angels* do in *Heaven*, that *the foundations of the prison were shaken, all the doors were opened, and every ones bands were loosed*.

And shall we now ask for motives to this divine exercise, when instead of *arguments*, we have here such *miracles* to convince us of its mighty power with God?

Could God by a voice from Heaven more expressly call us to these songs of praise, than by thus shewing us, how he *bears*, *delivers*, and *rewards* those that use them?

But this by the way. I now return to the objection in hand; and answer *Fourthly*, That the *privacy* of our prayers is not destroy'd by our *having*, but by our *seeking* witnesses of them.

If therefore no body hears you but those you cannot separate your self from, you are as much in *secret*, and *your Father who seeth in secret*, will as truly reward your secrecy, as if you was seen by him alone.

Fifthly, *Private* prayer, as it is oppos'd to prayer in *publick*, does not suppose, that no one is to have any witness of it. For *husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children, masters and servants, tutors and pupils*, are to be witnesses to one another of such devotion, as may truly and properly be call'd private. It is far from being a duty to conceal such devotion from such near relations.

In all these cases therefore, where such relations sometimes pray together in private, and sometimes apart by themselves, the chanting of a Psalm can have nothing objected against it.

Our blessed Lord commands us, when we *fast*, to *anoint our heads, and wash our faces, that we appear not unto men to fast, but unto our Father which is in secret*.

But this only means, that we must not make *publick ostentation* to the world of our *fasting*.

For if no one was to fast in *private*, or could be said to fast in private, but he that had no witnesses of it, no one could keep a private fast, but he that liv'd by himself: For every family must know who fasts in it. Therefore the *privacy* of fasting does not suppose such a privacy as excludes *every body* from knowing it,

it, but such a privacy as does not seek to be known abroad.

Cornelius the devout Centurion, of whom
 Acts x. 2. the Scripture saith, that he gave
much, and prayed to God alway,
 saith unto St. Peter, *four days ago I was fasting*
until this hour.

Now that this fasting was sufficiently *private* and acceptable to God, appears from the vision of an *Angel*, with which the holy man was bless'd at that time.

But that it was not so private, as to be entirely unknown to others, appears, as from the relation of it here, so from what is said
 v. 7. in another place, that he *call'd two*
of his household servants, and a de-
vout soldier of them that waited upon him conti-
nually. So that *Cornelius* his fasting was so far from being unknown to his family, that the soldiers and they of his household were made devout themselves, by *continually wait-*
ing upon him, that is, by seeing and partaking of his good works.

The whole of the matter is this. *Great part* of the world can be as private as they please, therefore let them use this excellent devotion between God and themselves.

As therefore the *privacy* or *excellency* of fasting is not destroy'd by being known to some particular persons, neither would the *privacy* or *excellency* of your devotions be hurt, though by *chanting* a Psalm, you should be heard by some of your family.

Another

Another great part of the world must and ought to have witnessers of several of their devotions; let them therefore not neglect the use of a *Psalm* at such times as it ought to be known to those with whom they live, that they do not neglect their prayers. For surely, there can be no harm in being known to be singing a *Psalm*, at such times as it ought to be known that you are at your prayers.

And if at other times, you desire to be in such secrecy at your devotions, as to have nobody suspect it, and for that reason forbear your *Psalm*; I have nothing to object against it: Provided, that at the known hours of prayer, you never omit this practice.

For who would not be often doing that in the day, which St. Paul and Silas would not neglect in the middle of the night? And if when you are thus singing, it should come into your head, how the prison shak'd, and the doors open'd, when St. Paul sang, it would do your devotion no harm.

Lastly, Seeing our imaginations have great power over our hearts, and can mightily affect us with their representations, it would be of great use to you, if at the beginning of your devotions, you was to imagine to your self some such representations, as might heat and warm your heart into a temper suitable to those prayers that you are then about to offer unto God.

As thus; before you begin your *Psalm* of praise and rejoicing in God, make this use of your imagination. Be

Be still, and *imagine* to your self, that you saw the heavens open, and the glorious Choirs of Cherubims and Seraphims about the throne of God. *Imagine* that you hear the musick of those Angelick voices that cease not day and night to sing the glories of him that *is*, and *was*, and *is to come*.

Help your imagination with such passages of Scripture as these. *Revel. vii. 9. I beheld, and lo in heaven a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the lamb, cloath'd with white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb.*

And all the angels stood round about the throne, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and strength, be unto God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Think upon this till your imagination has carried you above the clouds, till it has plac'd you amongst those heavenly beings, and made you long to bear a part in their eternal musick.

If you will but use your self to this method, and let your imagination dwell upon such representations as these, you will soon find it to be an excellent means of raising the spirit of devotion within you.

Always therefore begin your *Psalm*, or *Song of praise*, with these *imaginations*; and at

every verse of it, imagine your self amongst those heavenly companions, that your voice is added to theirs, and that *Angels* join with you, and you with them ; and that you with a poor and low voice are singing that on earth, which they are singing in heaven.

Again, Sometimes *imagine* that you had been one of those that joined with our blessed Saviour when he *sung an Hymn*. Strive to imagine to your self, with what *majesty* he look'd ; fancy that you had stood *close* by him surrounded with his *glory*. Think how your heart would have been *inflam'd*, what *ecstasies* of joy you would have then felt, when *singing* with the Son of God. Think again and again, with what joy and devotion you would then have sung, had this been really your happy state, and what a punishment you should have thought it, to have been then silent ; and let this teach you how to be affected with *Psalms* and *Hymns* of thanksgiving.

Again, Sometimes imagine to your self, that you saw holy *David* with his *hands* upon his *harp*, and his *eyes* fix'd upon *heaven*, calling in transport upon all the Creation, *Sun* and *Moon*, *light* and *darkness*, *day* and *night*, *men* and *angels*, to joyn with his rapturous soul in praising the Lord of Heaven.

Dwell upon this imagination, till you think you are singing with this divine musician, and let such a companion teach you to exalt your heart unto God in the following Psalm ; which you may use constantly first in the morning. Psalm

Pſalm cxlv. *I will magnify thee, O God my king: and I will praise thy name for ever and ever, &c.*

These following Pſalms, as the 34th, 96th, 103d, 111th, 146th, 147th, are such as wonderfully set forth the glory of God; and therefore you may keep to any one of them at any particular hour, as you like: Or you may take the finest parts of any Pſalms, and so adding them together, may make them fitter for your own devotion.

C H A P. XVI.

Recommending devotions at nine o'clock in the morning, called in Scripture, the third hour of the day. The subject of these prayers, is humility.

I Am now come to another hour of prayer, which in Scripture is called the *third hour* of the day; but according to our way of numbering the hours, it is called the ninth hour of the morning.

The devout Christian must at this time look upon himself as called upon by God to renew his acts of prayer, and address himself again to the throne of grace.

There is indeed no express command in Scripture to repeat our devotions at this hour. But then it is to be consider'd also, that neither is there any express command to begin and end the day with prayer. So that if that be looked upon as a reason for neglecting devotion

votion at this hour, it may as well be urged as a reason, for neglecting devotion both at the beginning and end of the day.

But if the practice of the saints in all ages of the world, if the customs of the pious *Jews* and primitive Christians be of any force with us, we have authority enough to persuade us, to make this hour a constant season of devotion.

The Scriptures shew us how this hour was consecrated to devotion both by *Jews* and Christians; so that if we desire to number ourselves amongst those whose hearts were devoted unto God, we must not let this hour pass, without presenting us to him in some solemnities of devotion. And besides this authority for this practice, the reasonableness of it is sufficient to invite us to the observance of it.

For if you was up at a good time in the morning, your first devotions will have been at *proper* distance from this hour; you will have been long enough at other business, to make it proper for you to return to this greatest of all business, the raising your soul and affections unto God.

But if you have risen so *late*, as to be hardly able to begin your first devotions at this *hour*, which is proper for your *second*, you may thence learn, that the indulging yourself in the morning sleep is no *small* matter; since it sets you so far *back* in your devotions, and

robs you of those graces and blessings, which are obtained by frequent prayers.

For if prayer has *power* with God, if it *looses* the bands of sin, if it *purifies* the soul, *reforms* our hearts, and draws down the *aids* of divine grace; how can that be reckon'd a small matter, which robs us of an hour of prayer?

Imagine yourself some where placed in the air, as a spectator of all that pass'es in the world; and that you saw in one view, the devotions which all Christian people offer unto God every day. Imagine, that you saw some piously dividing the *day* and *night*, as the primitive Christians did, and constant at all hours of devotion, *singing* Psalms, and *calling* upon God, at all those times, that *Saints* and *Martyrs* received their gifts and graces from God.

Imagine that you saw others living without any rules, as to *times* and *frequency* of prayer, and only at their devotions sooner or later, as *sleep* and *laziness* happens to permit them.

Now if you was to see this, as God sees it, how do you suppose you should be affected with this sight? What judgment do you imagine, you should pass upon these different sorts of people? Could you think, that those who were thus *exact* in their rules of devotion, got nothing by their *exactness*? Could you think, that their prayers were received just in the same manner, and procured them no more blessings,

blessings, than theirs do, who prefer laziness and indulgence to *times* and *rules* of devotion?

Could you take the one to be as true servants of God, as the other? Could you imagine, that those who were thus different in their *lives*, would find no difference in their states after *death*? Could you think it a matter of *indifferency*, to which of these people you were *most* like?

If not, let it be now your care to join yourself to that number of devout people, to that society of saints, amongst whom you desire to be found, when you leave the world.

And altho' the bare *number* and *repetition* of our prayers is of little value, yet since prayer rightly and attentively performed, is the most *natural means* of amending and purifying our hearts; since *importunity* and *frequency* in prayer is as much press'd upon us by Scripture, as prayer itself; we may be sure, that when we are frequent and importunate in our prayers, we are taking the *best means* of obtaining the highest benefits of a devout life.

And on the other hand, they who through negligence, laziness, or any other indulgence, render themselves either unable, or uninclin'd to observe *rules* and *hours* of devotion, we may be sure, that they deprive themselves of those graces and blessings, which an *exact* and *fervent* devotion procures from God.

Now as this frequency of prayer is founded in the doctrines of Scripture, and recommend-

ed to us by the practice of the true worshippers of God; so we ought not to think ourselves excused from it, but where we can shew, that we are spending our time in such business, as is more acceptable to God, than these returns of prayer.

Least of all must we imagine, that *dulness, negligence, indulgence, or diversions*, can be any pardonable excuses, for our not observing an exact and frequent method of devotion.

If you are of a devout spirit, you will rejoice at these returns of prayer, which keep your soul in an holy enjoyment of God; which change your passions into divine love, and fill your heart with stronger joys and consolations, than you can possibly meet with in any thing else.

And if you are not of a devout spirit, then you are moreover obliged to this frequency of prayer, to train and exercise your heart into a true sense and feeling of devotion.

Now seeing the holy spirit of the Christian Religion, and the example of the saints of all ages, calls upon you thus to divide the day into hours of prayer; so it will be highly beneficial to you, to make a right choice of those matters, which are to be the subject of your prayers, and to keep *every* hour of prayer appropriated to some *particular* subject, which you may alter or enlarge, according as the state you are in requires.

By this means, you will have an opportunity of being *large* and *particular* in all the
parts

parts of any virtue or grace, which you then make the subject of your prayers. And by asking for it in *all* its parts, and making it the substance of a *whole* prayer once every day, you will soon find a mighty change in your heart; and that you cannot thus constantly pray for all the parts of any virtue every day of your life, and yet live the rest of the day contrary to it.

If a *worldly-minded* man was to pray every day against all the *instances* of a worldly temper; if he should make a large *description* of the temptations of covetousness, and desire God to assist him to reject them all, and to disappoint him in all his covetous designs, he would find his conscience so much *awaken'd*, that he would be forced either to forsake such prayers, or to forsake a worldly life.

The same will hold true in any other instance. And if *we ask, and have not*, 'tis because *we ask amiss*. Because we ask in *cold* and *general* forms, such as only *name* the virtues, without describing their *particular parts*, such as are not enough particular to our *condition*, and therefore make no change in our hearts. Whereas when a man enumerates all the parts of any virtue in his prayers, his conscience is thereby *awaken'd*, and he is frightened at seeing how far short he is of it. And this stirs him up to an ardor in devotion, when he sees how much he wants of that virtue which he is praying for.

I have in the last chapter laid before you the excellency of *praise* and *thanksgiving*, and recommended that as the subject of your first devotions in the morning.

And because an *humble state* of soul is the very state of Religion, because humility is the *life* and *soul* of piety, the *foundation* and *support* of every virtue and good work, the best *guard* and *security* of all holy affections; I shall recommend humility to you, as highly proper to be made the constant subject of your devotions, at this *third hour* of the day; earnestly desiring you to think no day *safe*, or *likely* to end well, in which you have not thus *early* put yourself in this posture of humility, and called upon God to carry you through the day in the exercise of a *meeke* and *lowly* spirit.

This virtue is so essential to the *right state* of our souls, that there is no pretending to a *reasonable* or *pious* life without it. We may as well think to see without *eyes*, or live without *breath*, as to live in the spirit of religion, without the spirit of *humility*.

And altho' it is thus the *soul* and *essence* of all religious duties, yet is it, generally speaking, the least *understood*, the least *regarded*, the least *intended*, the least *desired* and *sought* after, of all other virtues, amongst all sorts of Christians.

No people have more occasion to be afraid of the approaches of pride, than those who have made *some advances* in a pious life. For

pride

pride can grow as well upon our *virtues* as our *vices*, and steals upon us on all occasions.

Every good thought that we have, every good action that we do, lays us open to pride, and exposes to the assaults of vanity and self-satisfaction.

It is not only the beauty of our persons, the gifts of fortune, our natural talents, and the distinctions of life; but even our *devotions* and *alms*, our *fastings* and *humiliations*, expose us to fresh and strong temptations of this evil spirit.

And it is for this reason, that I so earnestly advise every *devout* person to begin every day in this exercise of humility, that he may go on in *safety* under the protection of this good guide, and not fall a sacrifice to his own progress in those virtues, which are to save mankind from destruction.

Humility does not consist in having a *worse* opinion of ourselves than we deserve, or in abasing ourselves *lower* than we really are. But as all virtue is founded in *truth*, so humility is founded in a *true* and *just* sense of our *weakness*, *misery*, and *sin*. He that rightly feels and lives in this sense of his condition, lives in humility.

The *weakness* of our state appears from our inability to do any thing, as of ourselves. In our natural state we are entirely without *any power*; we are indeed active beings, but can only act by a power, that is every *moment* lent us from God.

We have no more power of our own to move a *hand*, or stir a *foot*, than to move the *sun*, or stop the *clouds*.

When we *speak* a word, we feel no more power in ourselves to do it, than we feel ourselves able to raise the *dead*. For we act no more within our *own power*, or by our own strength, when we *speak* a word, or make a *sound*, than the *Apostles* acted within their own power, or by their own strength, when a *word* from their mouth cast out *devils*, and cured *diseases*.

As it was solely the power of God that enabled them to speak to *such purposes*, so it is solely the power of God that enables us to speak *at all*.

We indeed find that we can *speak*, as we find that we are *alive*; but the actual exercise of speaking is no more in our own power, than the actual enjoyment of life.

This is the dependent, helpless poverty of our state; which is a great reason for humility. For since we neither are, nor can do any thing of ourselves, to be proud of any thing that we are, or of any thing that we can do, and to ascribe glory to ourselves for these things, as our own ornaments, has the guilt both of *stealing* and *lying*. It has the guilt of stealing, as it gives to ourselves those things which only belong to God. It has the guilt of lying, as it is the denying the truth of our state, and pretending to be something that we are not.

Second:

Secondly, Another argument for humility, is founded in the *misery* of our condition.

Now the misery of our condition appears in this, that we use these *borrow'd* powers of our nature, to the *torment* and *vexation* of our selves, and our fellow-creatures.

God Almighty has entrusted us with the use of reason, and we use it to the disorder and corruption of our nature. We reason ourselves into all kinds of folly and misery, and make our lives the sport of foolish and extravagant passions: Seeking after imaginary happiness in all kinds of shapes, creating to ourselves a thousand wants, amusing our hearts with false hopes and fears, using the world worse than irrational animals, envying, vexing and tormenting one another with restless passions, and unreasonable contentions.

Let any man but look back upon his own life, and see what use he has made of his reason, how little he has consulted it, and how less he has followed it. What foolish *passions*, what vain *thoughts*, what needless *labours*, what extravagant *projects*, have taken up the greatest part of his life. How foolish he has been in his *words* and *conversation*; how seldom he has done well with *judgment*, and how often he has been kept from doing ill by *accident*; how seldom he has been able to *please* himself, and how often he has *displeased* others; how often he has changed his counsels, hated what he lov'd, and lov'd what he hated; how often

often he has been enrag'd and transported at *trifles*, pleas'd and displeas'd with the very *same things*, and constantly changing from one vanity to another. Let a man but take this view of his own life, and he will see reason enough to confess, that *pride was not made for man*.

Let him but consider, that if the world knew all that of him, which he knows of himself; if they saw what *vanity* and *passions* govern his inside, and what secret *tempers* fully and corrupt his best actions, he would have no more pretence to be honour'd and admir'd for his *goodness* and *wisdom*, than a *rotten* and *distempered* body to be lov'd and admir'd for its *beauty* and *comeliness*.

This is so true, and so known to the hearts of almost all people, that nothing would appear more dreadful to them, than to have their hearts thus fully discovered to the eyes of all beholders.

And perhaps there are very few people in the world, who would not rather chuse to die; than to have all their *secret* follies, the *errors* of their judgments, the *vanity* of their minds, the *falseness* of their pretences, the frequency of their *vain* and disorderly *passions*, their *uneasiness*, *hatreds*, *envies*, and *vexations*, made known unto the world.

And shall pride be entertained in a heart thus *conscious* of its own *miserable behaviour*?

Shall a creature in such a condition, that he could not support himself under the *shame*
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of being known to the world in his *real state*; shall such a creature, because his shame is only known to God, to holy Angels, and his own conscience; shall he, in the sight of God and holy angels, dare to be *vain* and *proud* of himself?

Thirdly, If to this we add the *shame* and *guilt* of sin, we shall find a still greater reason for humility.

No creature that had liv'd in innocence, would have thereby got any pretence for *self-honour* and *esteem*; because as a creature, all that it *is*, or *has*, or *does*, is from God, and therefore the honour of all that belongs to it, is only due to God.

But if a creature that is a *sinner*, and under the *displeasure* of the great governor of all the world, and deserving nothing from him, but pains and punishments for the *shameful* abuse of his powers; if such a creature pretends to self-glory for any thing that he is, or does, he can only be said to glory in his shame?

Now how *monstrous* and *shameful* the nature of sin is, is sufficiently apparent from that *great attonement* that is necessary to cleanse us from the guilt of it.

Nothing less has been requir'd to take away the guilt of our sins, than the sufferings and death of the Son of God. Had he not taken our nature upon him, our nature had been
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for ever separated from God, and incapable of ever appearing before him.

And is there any room for *pride* or *self-glory*, whilst we are partakers of *such a nature* as this?

Have our sins render'd us so abominable and odious to him that made us, that he could not so much as *receive* our prayers, or *admit* our repentance, 'till the Son of God made himself man, and became a suffering advocate for our whole race; and can we in *this state* pretend to high thoughts of our selves? Shall we presume to take delight in our *own worth*, who are not worthy so much as to *ask pardon* for our sins, without the mediation and intercession of the Son of God?

Thus deep is the foundation of humility laid, in these deplorable circumstances of our condition; which shew, that it is as great an offence against truth, and the reason of things, for a man in this state of things, to lay claim to any degrees of glory, as to pretend to the honour of creating himself. If man will boast of any thing as his own, he must boast of his *misery* and *sin*; for there is nothing else but this, that is his own property.

Turn your eyes towards heaven, and fancy that you saw what is doing there; that you saw *cherubims* and *seraphims*, and all the glorious *inhabitants* of that place, all united in one work; not seeking *glory* from one another, not labouring their own *advancement*, not contemplating their own *perfections*, not singing
their

their own *praises*, not valuing *themselves*, and despising *others*, but all employ'd in one and the same work, all happy in one and the same joy; *casting down their crowns before the throne of God, giving glory, and honour, and power to him alone.*

Rev. iv. 10,
11.

Then turn your eyes to the *fallen world*, and consider how unreasonable and odious it must be, for such poor *worms*, such miserable *sinners*, to take delight in their own *fancy'd glories*, whilst the highest and most glorious sons of heaven, seek for no other greatness and honour, but that of ascribing all honour and greatness, and glory to God alone?

Pride is only the disorder of the *fallen world*, it has no place amongst other beings; it can only subsist where *ignorance* and *sensuality*, *lies* and *falsehood*, *lusts* and *impurity* reign.

Let a man, when he is most delighted with his own *figure*, look upon a *crucifix*, and contemplate our blessed Lord *stretch'd* out, and *nail'd* upon a *Cross*; and then let him consider, how absurd it must be, for a heart full of *pride* and *vanity*, to pray to God, through the sufferings of such a *meek* and *crucify'd* Saviour?

These are the reflections that you are often to meditate upon, that you may thereby be dispos'd to walk before God and man in such a spirit of humility, as becomes the *weak*,
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miserable, sinful state of all that are descended from fallen *Adam*.

When you have by such general reflections as these, convinc'd your mind of the reasonableness of humility, you must not content your self with this, as if you was therefore humble, because your mind acknowledges the reasonableness of humility, and declares against pride. But you must immediately enter your self into the practice of this virtue, like a *young beginner*, that has all of it to learn, that can learn but little at a time, and with great difficulty. You must consider, that you have not only this virtue to learn, but that you must be content to proceed as a learner in it all your time, endeavouring after greater degrees of it, and practising every day *acts* of humility, as you every day practice acts of devotion.

You would not imagine your self to be devout, because in your judgment you approv'd of prayers, and often declar'd your mind in favour of devotion. Yet how many people imagine themselves humble enough, for no other reason, but because they often commend humility, and make vehement declarations against pride?

Cæcus is a rich man, of good breeding, and very fine parts. He is fond of *dress*, curious in the *smallest* matters that can add any *ornament* to his person. He is haughty and imperious to all his inferiors, is very full of every thing that he says, or does, and never

imagines it possible for such a judgment as his to be mistaken. He can bear no contradiction, and discovers the weakness of your understanding, as soon as ever you oppose him. He changes every thing in his *house*, his *habit*, and his *equipage*, as often as any thing more elegant comes in his way. *Cæcus* would have been very religious, but that he always thought he was so.

There is nothing so odious to *Cæcus* as a proud man; and the misfortune is, that in this he is so very quick-sighted, that he discovers in almost every body, some *strokes* of vanity.

On the other hand, he is exceeding fond of humble and modest persons. Humility, says he, is so amiable a quality, that it forces our esteem where-ever we meet with it. There is no possibility of despising the *meanest* person that has it, or of esteeming the *greatest* man that wants it.

Cæcus no more suspects himself to be proud, than he suspects his want of sense. And the reason of it is, because he always finds himself so in love with humility, and so enrag'd at pride.

It is very true, *Cæcus*, you speak *sincerely* when you say you love humility, and abhor pride. You are no *hypocrite*, you speak the *true* sentiments of your mind; but then take care that you are not along with you, *Cæcus*, that you only love humility, and hate pride, in *other people*. You never once in your life thought of any
other

other humility, or of any other pride, than that which you have seen in *other people*.

The case of *Cæcus* is a common case; many people live in all the instances of pride, and indulge every vanity that can enter into their minds, and yet never suspect themselves to be govern'd by pride and vanity, because they know how much they dislike proud people, and how mightily they are pleas'd with humility and modesty, where-ever they find them.

All their speeches in favour of humility, and all their railings against pride, are look'd upon as so many true exercises, and effects of their own humble spirit.

Whereas in truth, these are so far from being proper acts, or proofs of humility, that they are great arguments of the want of it.

For the fuller of pride any one is himself, the more impatient will he be at the smallest instances of it in other people. And the less humility any one has in his own mind, the more will he demand, and be delighted with it in other people.

You must therefore act by a quite contrary measure, and reckon your self only so far humble, as you impose *every instance* of humility upon your self, and *never* call for it in other people. So far an enemy to pride, as you never *spare* it in your self, nor ever *cease* it in other persons.

Now

Now in order to do this, you need only consider, that pride and humility signify nothing to you, but so far as they are your own; that they do you neither good nor harm, but as they are the tempers of your own heart.

The loving therefore of humility is of no benefit or advantage to you, but so far as you love to see all your own thoughts, words, and actions govern'd by it. And the hating of pride does you no good, is no perfection in you, but so far as you hate to harbour any degree of it in your own heart.

Now in order to begin, and set out well in the practice of humility, you must take it for granted, that you are *proud*, that you have all your life been more or less infected with this unreasonable temper.

You should believe also, that it is your *greatest* weakness, that your heart is most *subject* to it, that it is so *constantly* stealing upon you, that you have reason to watch and suspect its approaches in all your actions.

For this is what most people; especially new beginners in a pious life, may with great truth think of themselves.

For there is no one vice that is more deeply rooted in our nature, or that receives such constant nourishment from almost every thing that we think or do. There being hardly any thing in the world that we *want* or *use*, or any *action* or *duty* of life, but pride finds some means or other to take hold of it. So that at what time soever we begin to offer our selves

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to God, we can hardly be surer of any thing, than that we have a great deal of pride to repent of.

If therefore you find it disagreeable to your mind to entertain this opinion of your self, and that you cannot put your self amongst those that want to be cur'd of pride, you may be as sure, as if an *Angel* from heaven had told you, that you have not only much, but all your humility to seek.

For you can have no greater sign of a more confirm'd pride, than when you think that you are humble enough. He that thinks he loves God enough, shews himself to be an entire stranger to that holy passion; so he that thinks he has humility enough, shews that he is not so much as a beginner in the practice of true humility.

C H A P. XVII.

Shewing how difficult the practice of humility is made, by the general spirit and temper of the world. How Christianity requireth us to live contrary to the world.

EVery person, when he first applies himself to the exercise of this virtue of humility, must, as I said before, consider himself as a *learner*, that is to learn something that

that is contrary to former tempers and habits of mind, and which can only be got by *daily* and *constant* practice.

He has not only as much to do, as he that has some new *art*, or *science* to learn, but he has also a great deal to *unlearn*: He is to forget, and lay aside his *own spirit*, which has been a long while fixing and forming it self; he must forget, and depart from abundance of passions and opinions, which the *fashion*, and *vogue*, and spirit of the world, has made natural to him.

He must lay aside his own spirit; because as we are born in *sin*, so in *pride*, which is as *natural* to us as self-love, and continually springs from it. And this is one reason why Christianity is so often represented as a *new birth*, and a *new spirit*.

He must lay aside the opinions and passions which he has receiv'd from the world, because the *vogue* and *fashion* of the world, by which we have been carry'd away, as in a *torrent*, before we could pass right judgments of the value of things, is in many respects contrary to *humility*; so that we must *unlearn* what the spirit of the world has taught us, before we can be govern'd by the spirit of humility.

The Devil is call'd in Scripture the prince of this world, because he has great power in it, because many of its rules and principles are invented by this evil spirit, the father of all lies and falshood; to separate us from God, and prevent our return to happiness.

Now according to the *spirit* and *vogue* of this world, whose corrupt air we have all breath'd, there are many things that pass for *great*, and *honourable*, and most *desirable*, which yet are so far from being so, that the *true greatness* and honour of our nature consists in the not desiring them.

To abound in wealth, to have fine houses, and rich cloaths, to be attended with splendor and equipage, to be beautiful in our persons, to have titles of dignity, to be above our fellow-creatures, to command the bows and obeisance of other people, to be look'd on with admiration, to overcome our enemies with power, to subdue all that oppose us, to set out our selves in as much splendor as we can, to live highly and magnificently, to eat and drink, and delight our selves in the most costly manner, these are the *great*, the *honourable*, the *desirable* things, to which the *spirit* of the world turns the eyes of all people. And many a man is afraid of *standing* still, and not engaging in the pursuit of these things, lest the same world should take him for a *fool*.

The history of the Gospel, is chiefly the history of Christ's *conquest* over this *spirit* of the world. And the number of true Christians, is only the number of those who following the *Spirit* of Christ, have liv'd *contrary* to this spirit of the world.

If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Again, *Whosoever is born of God,*

God, *overcometh the world*. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. This is the language of the whole New Testament. This is the *mark* of Christianity; you are to be *dead*, that is, dead to the *spirit* and *temper* of the world, and live a new life in the *Spirit* of Jesus Christ.

But notwithstanding the clearness and plainness of these doctrines which thus renounce the world, yet great part of Christians live and die slaves to the *customs*, and *temper* of the world.

How many people swell with *pride* and *vanity*, for such things as they would not know how to value at all, but that they are admir'd in the world?

Would a man take *ten years* more drudgery in business to add *two horses* more to his coach, but that he knows, that the world most of all admires a *coach* and *six*? How fearful are many people of having their houses poorly furnish'd, or themselves meanly cloath'd, for this only reason, lest the world should make no account of them, and place them amongst *low* and *mean* people?

How often would a man have *yielded* to the haughtiness and ill nature of others, and shewn a *submissive* temper, but that he dares not pass for such a poor-spirited man in the *opinion* of the world?

Many a man would often drop a *resentment*, and forgive an *affront*, but that he is afraid,

if he should, the world would not forgive him?

How many would practise Christian *temperance* and sobriety in its utmost *perfection*, were it not for the censure which the world passes upon such a life?

Others have frequent intentions of living up to the *rules* of Christian perfection, which they are frightened from, by considering what the world would say of them.

Thus do the impressions which we have receiv'd from living in the world enslave our minds, that we dare not attempt to be *eminent* in the sight of God, and holy Angels, for fear of being little in the eyes of the world.

From this quarter arises the greatest difficulty of humility, because it cannot subsist in any mind, but so far as it is dead to the world, and has parted with all desires of enjoying its greatness, and honours. So that in order to be truly humble, you must unlearn all those notions which you have been all your life learning from this corrupt spirit of the world.

You can make no *stand* against the assaults of pride, the meek affections of humility can have no place in your soul, till you stop the power of the world over you, and resolve against a *blind obedience* to its laws.

And when you are once advanc'd thus far, as to be able to stand still in the torrent of worldly *fashions* and *opinions*, and examine
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the *worth* and *value* of things which are most admir'd and valued in the world, you have gone a great way in the gaining of your freedom, and have laid a good foundation for the amendment of your heart.

For as great as the power of the world is, it is all built upon a *blind obedience*, and we need only open our eyes, to get quit of its power.

Ask who you will, *learned* or *unlearned*, every one seems to know and confess, that the general temper and spirit of the world, is nothing else but *humour*, *folly*, and *extravagance*.

Who will not own, that the wisdom of *Philosophy*, the piety of *Religion*, was always confin'd to a small number? And is not this expressly owning and confessing, that the *common spirit* and *temper* of the world, is neither according to the wisdom of *Philosophy*, nor the piety of *Religion*.

The world therefore seems enough condemn'd even by its self, to make it very easy for a thinking man to be of the same judgment.

And therefore I hope you will not think it a *hard saying*, that in order to be *humble*, you must withdraw your obedience from that *vulgar spirit* which gives laws to *Fops* and *Coquets*, and form your judgments according to the wisdom of *Philosophy*, and the piety of *Religion*. Who would be afraid of making such a change as this?

Again, To lessen your fear and regard to the opinion of the world, think how soon the world will disregard you, and have no more thought or concern about you, than about the *poorest animal* that dy'd in a *ditch*.

Your friends, if they can, may bury you with some distinction, and set up a monument to let posterity see that your *dust* lies under such a *Stone*; and when that is done, all is done. Your place is fill'd up by another, the world is just in the same state it was, you are blotted out of its sight, and as much forgotten by the world as if you had never belong'd to it.

Think upon the *rich*, the *great*, and the *learned* persons, that have made great figures, and been high in the esteem of the world; many of them died in your time, and yet they are sunk, and lost, and gone, and as much disregarded by the world, as if they had been only so many *bubbles of water*.

Think again, how many poor souls see heaven lost, and lie now expecting a miserable eternity, for their service and homage to a world, that thinks it self every whit as well without them, and is just as merry as it was, when they were in it.

Is it therefore worth your while to lose the *smallest degree* of virtue, for the sake of pleasing so *bad a master*, and so *false a friend* as the world is?

Is it worth your while to bow the knee to such an *idol* as this, that so soon will have
neither

neither *eyes*, nor *ears*, nor a *heart* to regard you; instead of serving that great, and holy, and mighty God, that will make all his servants partakers of his own eternity?

Will you let the fear of a false world, that has no love for you, keep you from the fear of that God, who has only created you, that he may love and bless you to all eternity?

Lastly, you must consider what behaviour the profession of Christianity requireth of you, with regard to the world.

Now this is plainly deliver'd in these words: *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.* Gal. i. 4. Christianity therefore implieth a deliverance from this world; and he that professeth it, professeth to live contrary to every thing and every temper, that is peculiar to this evil world.

St. *John* declareth this opposition to the world in this manner, *They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God.* 1 Joh. iv. 5. This is the description of the followers of Christ; and it is proof enough that no people are to be reckon'd Christians in reality, who in their hearts and tempers belong to this world. *We know*, saith the same Apostle, *That we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.* c. v. v. 19.

Christians therefore can no farther know that they are of God, than so far as they know they are not of the world; that is, that they don't

don't live according to the *ways* and *spirit* of the world. For all the ways, and maxims, and politicks, and tempers of the world, lie in wickedness. And he is only of God, or born of God in Christ Jesus, who *has overcome this world*, that is, who has chose to live by faith, and govern his actions by the principles of a wisdom revealed from God by Christ Jesus.

St. Paul takes it for a certainty so well known to Christians, that they are no longer to be consider'd as living in this world, that he thus argues from it, as from an undeniable principle, concerning the abolishing the rites of the *Jewish* law: *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world,*

Col. ii. 20. *why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?* Here

could be no argument in this, but in the Apostle's taking it for undeniable, that Christians knew, that their profession requir'd them to have done with all the tempers, and passions of this world, to live as citizens of the new *Jerusalem*, and to have their conversation in heaven.

Our blessed Lord himself has fully determin'd this point, in these words: *They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.* This is the state of Christianity with regard to this world. If you are not thus out of, and contrary to the world, you want the distinguishing mark of Christianity; you don't belong to Christ, but by being out of the world as he was out of it.

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We may deceive our selves, if we please, with vain and softning comments upon these words, but they are and will be understood in their first simplicity and plainness, by every one that reads them in the same spirit that our blessed Lord spoke them. And to understand them in any lower, less significant meaning, is to let carnal wisdom explain away that doctrine, by which it self was to be destroy'd.

The Christians great conquest over the world, is all contain'd in the mystery of Christ upon the *Cross*. It was there, and from thence, that he taught all Christians how they were to come out of, and conquer the world, and what they were to do in order to be his Disciples. And all the *doctrines, sacraments, and institutions* of the Gospel, are only so many explications of the meaning, and applications of the benefit of this great mystery.

And the state of Christianity implieth nothing else but an *entire, absolute* conformity to that *spirit* which Christ shew'd in the mysterious sacrifice of himself upon the *cross*.

Every man therefore, is only so far a Christian, as he partakes of this spirit of Christ. It was this that made St. Paul so passionately express himself, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*: But why does he glory? Is it because Christ had suffer'd in his stead, and had excus'd him from suffering? No, by no means. But it was because his christian profession had call'd him to the
honour

honour of suffering with Christ, and of dying to the world under reproach and contempt, as he had done upon the Cross. For he immediately adds, *Gal. vi. 14. by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* This you see was the reason of his glorying in the cross of Christ, because it had call'd him to a like state of death and crucifixion to the world.

Thus was the Cross of Christ, in *St. Paul's* days, the glory of Christians; not as it signified their not being ashamed to own a Master that was crucified, but as it signified their glorying in a Religion, which was nothing else but a doctrine of the Cross, that call'd them to the same suffering spirit, the same sacrifice of themselves, the same renunciation of the world, the same humility and meekness, the same patient bearing of injuries, reproaches, and contempts, and the same dying to all the greatness, honours and happiness of this world, which Christ shew'd upon the Cross.

To have a true idea of Christianity, we must not consider our blessed Lord as suffering in *our stead*, but as our *representative*, acting in our *name*, and with such particular merit, as to make our *joining* with him, *acceptable* unto God.

He suffer'd, and was a sacrifice, to make our sufferings and sacrifice of our selves fit to be receiv'd by God. And we are to suffer, to be crucified, to die, and rise with Christ,
 or

or else his crucifixion, death and resurrection will profit us nothing.

The necessity of this conformity to all that Christ did, and suffer'd upon our account, is very plain from the whole tenor of Scripture.

First, as to his sufferings, this is the only condition of our being sav'd by them, if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.

Secondly, as to his Crucifixion. Rom. vi. 6.
Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, &c. Here you see Christ is not crucified in *our stead*; but unless our old man be really crucified with him, the cross of Christ will profit us nothing.

Thirdly, as to the death of Christ, the condition is this; If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. If therefore Christ be dead alone, if we are not dead with him, we are as sure from this Scripture, that we shall not live with him.

Lastly, as to the resurrection of Christ, the Scripture sheweth us how we are to partake of the benefit of it: If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Col. iii. 1.

Thus you see how plainly the Scripture sets forth our blessed Lord, as our *representative*,
acting

acting and suffering in our name, binding and obliging us to conform to all that he did and suffered for us.

It was for this reason, that the holy Jesus said of his disciples, and in them of all true believers, *They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.* Because all true believers conforming to the *sufferings, crucifixion, death, and resurrection* of Christ, live no longer after the spirit and temper of this world, but their *life is hid with Christ in God.*

This is the state of separation from the world, to which all orders of Christians are called. They must so far renounce all worldly tempers, be so far governed by the things of another life, as to shew, that they are truly and really *crucify'd, dead, and risen* with Christ. And it is as necessary for all Christians to conform to this *great change* of spirit, to be thus in Christ *new creatures*, as it was necessary that Christ should *suffer, dye, and rise* again for our salvation.

How high the Christian life is placed above the ways of this world, is wonderfully describ'd

by St. Paul in these words: *Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, tho' we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are pass'd away; behold, all things are become new.*

He that feels the *force and spirit* of these words, can hardly bear any human interpreta-

tion

tion of them. Henceforth, says he; that is, since the death and resurrection of Christ, the state of Christianity is become so glorious a state, that we don't even consider Christ himself as in the flesh upon earth, but as a God of glory in heaven; we know and consider ourselves not as men in the flesh, but as fellow-members of a new society, that are to have all our hearts, our tempers, and conversation in heaven.

Thus it is that Christianity has placed us out of, and above the world; and we fall from our calling, as soon as we fall into the tempers of the world.

Now as it was the spirit of the world that nailed our blessed Lord to the *cross*; so every man that has the spirit of Christ, that opposes the world as he did, will certainly be crucify'd by the world some way or other.

For Christianity still lives in the same world that Christ did; and these two will be utter enemies, till the kingdom of darkness is entirely at an end.

Had you lived with our Saviour as his true disciple, you had then been hated as he was; and if you now live in his spirit, the world will be the same enemy to you now, that it was to him then.

If ye were of the world, saith our blessed Lord, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

John xv. 19.

We are apt to lose the true meaning of these words, by considering them only as an *historical description* of something that was the state of our Saviour and his disciples at that time. But this is reading the Scripture as a *dead letter*; for they as exactly describe the state of true Christians at this, and all other times, to the end of the world.

For as *true Christianity* is nothing else but the spirit of Christ, so whether that spirit appear in the person of Christ himself, or his Apostles, or followers in any age, it is the same thing; whoever hath his spirit, will be hated, despised, and condemned by the world, as he was.

For the world will always love its own, and none but its own: this is as certain and unchangeable, as the contrariety betwixt *light* and *darkness*.

When the holy Jesus saith, *If the world hate you*, he does not add by way of consolation, that it may some time or other cease its hatred, or that it will not always hate them; but he only gives this as a reason for their bearing it, *You know that it hated me before it hated you*: signifying, that it was he, that is, his spirit, that by reason of its contrariety to the world, was then, and always would be, hated by it.

You will perhaps say, that the world is now become Christian, at least that part of it where we live; and therefore the world is not
now

now to be considered in that state of opposition to Christianity, as when it was *heathen*.

It is granted, the world now professeth Christianity. But will any one say, that this Christian world is of the spirit of Christ? Are its general tempers the tempers of Christ? Are the passions of sensuality, self-love, pride, covetousness, ambition, and vain-glory, less contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, now they are amongst Christians, than when they were amongst heathens? Or will you say, that the tempers and passions of the heathen world are lost and gone?

Consider, *secondly*, what you are to mean by the world. Now this is fully described to our hands by St. *John*. *All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh,* 1 John ii. 16.
the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, &c. This is an exact and full description of the world. Now will you say, that *this world* is become *Christian*? But if all this still subsists, then the *same world* is now in being, and the same enemy to Christianity, that was in St. *John's* days.

It was this world that St. *John* condemned, as being not of the Father; whether therefore it outwardly professeth, or openly persecuteth Christianity, it is still in the same state of contrariety to the true spirit and holiness of the Gospel.

And indeed the world by professing Christianity, is so far from being a less dangerous enemy than it was before, that it has by its

favours destroyed more Christians, than ever it did by the most violent persecution.

We must therefore be so far from considering the world as in a state of less enmity and opposition to Christianity, than it was in the first times of the Gospel, that we must guard against it as a greater and more dangerous enemy now, than it was in those times.

It is a greater enemy, because it has greater power over Christians by its favours, riches, honours, rewards and protections, than it had by the fire and fury of its persecutions.

It is a more dangerous enemy, by having lost its appearance of enmity. Its outward profession of Christianity makes it no longer consider'd as an enemy, and therefore the generality of people are easily persuaded to resign themselves up to be govern'd and directed by it.

How many consciences are kept at quiet, upon no other foundation, but because they sin under the authority of the christian world?

How many directions of the Gospel lye by unregarded; and how unconcernedly do particular persons read them; for no other reason, but because they seem unregarded by the christian world?

How many compliances do people make to the christian world, without any hesitation, or remorse; which if they had been requir'd of them only by heathens, would have been
refus'd,

refus'd, as contrary to the holiness of Christianity?

Who could be content with seeing how contrary his life is to the *Gospel*, but because he sees that he lives as the christian world doth?

Who that reads the *Gospel*, would want to be persuaded of the necessity of *great self-denial, humility, and poverty of spirit*, but that the authority of the world has banish'd this doctrine of the cross?

There is nothing therefore, that a good Christian ought to be more suspicious of, or more constantly guard against, than the authority of the *christian world*.

And all the passages of Scripture, which represent the world as contrary to Christianity, which require our separation from it, as from a *manmon of unrighteousness*, a monster of iniquity, are all to be taken in the same *strict sense*, in relation to the present world.

For the change that the world has undergone, has only alter'd its methods, but not lessen'd its power of destroying Religion.

Christians had nothing to fear from the *heathen world*, but the loss of their lives; but the world become a *friend*, makes it difficult for them to *save* their Religion.

Whilst *pride, sensuality, covetousness* and *ambition*, had only the authority of the *heathen world*, Christians were thereby made more intent upon the contrary virtues. But when *pride, sensuality, covetousness* and *ambition*,

have the authority of the Christian world, then private Christians are in the utmost danger, not only of being sham'd out of the practice, but of losing the very notion of the piety of the Gospel.

There is therefore hardly any possibility of saving your self from the present world, but by considering it as the same *wicked enemy* to all true holiness, as it is represented in the Scriptures; and by assuring your self, that it is as dangerous to conform to its *tempers* and *passions*, now it is christian, as when it was heathen.

For only ask your self, Is the *piety*, the *humility*, the *sobriety* of the christian world, the piety, the humility, and sobriety of the christian spirit? If not, how can you be more undone by any world, than by conforming to that which is christian?

Need a man do more to make his soul unfit for the mercy of God, than by being *greedy* and *ambitious* of honour? Yet how can a man renounce this temper, without renouncing the spirit and temper of the world, in which you now live?

How can a man be made more incapable of the spirit of Christ, than by a *wrong value* for money; and yet how can he be more wrong in his value of it, than by following the authority of the christian world?

Nay, in every *order* and *station* of life, whether of *learning* or *business*, either in Church or State, you cannot act up to the spirit

rit of Religion, without renouncing the most *general temper and behaviour* of those, who are of the same order and business as your self.

And though *human prudence* seems to talk mighty wisely about the necessity of avoiding *particularities*, yet he that dares not be so *weak* as to be particular, will be often oblig'd to avoid the most substantial duties of christian piety.

These reflections will, I hope, help you to break through those difficulties, and resist those temptations, which the authority and fashion of the world hath rais'd against the practice of *christian humility*.

C H A P. XVIII.

Shewing how the education which men generally receive in their youth, makes the doctrines of humility difficult to be practis'd. The spirit of a better education, represented in the character of Paternus.

ANother difficulty in the practice of humility, arises from our education. We are all of us, for the most part corruptly educated, and then committed to take our course in a corrupt world; so that it is no

wonder, if examples of great piety are so seldom seen.

Great part of the world are undone, by being born and bred in families that have no Religion; where they are made vicious and irregular, by being like those with whom they first liv'd.

But this is not the thing I now mean; the education that I here intend, is such as children generally receive from virtuous and sober *parents*, and learned *tutors* and governors.

Had we continued perfect, as God created the first man, perhaps the perfection of our nature had been a sufficient *self-instruction* for every one. But as *sickness* and *diseases* have created the necessity of *medicines* and *physicians*, so the change and disorder of our rational nature, has introduc'd the necessity of *education* and *tutors*.

And as the only end of the physician is, to restore nature to its own state, so the only end of education is, to restore our rational nature to its proper state. Education therefore is to be consider'd as *reason* borrow'd at *second hand*, which is, as far as it can, to supply the loss of *original* perfection. And as physick may justly be call'd the *art* of restoring health, so education should be consider'd in no other light, than as the art of recovering to man the use of his reason.

Now as the instruction of every *art* or *science* is founded upon the *discoveries*, the *wisdom*, *experience* and *maxims* of the several
great

great men that have laboured in it; so that *human wisdom*, or *right use* of our reason, which young people should be call'd to by their education, is nothing else but the *best experience*, and *finest reasonings* of men, that have devoted themselves to the study of wisdom, and the improvement of human nature.

All therefore that *great saints*, and *dying men*, when the fullest of light and conviction, and after the highest improvement of their reason, all that they have said of the necessity of *piety*, of the excellency of *virtue*, of their *duty* to God, of the emptiness of riches, of the vanity of the *world*; all the *sentences*, *judgments*, *reasonings*, and *maxims* of the wisest of philosophers, when in their highest state of wisdom, should constitute the *common lessons* of instruction for youthful minds.

This is the only way to make the *young* and *ignorant* part of the world, the better for the *wisdom* and *knowledge* of the wise and ancient.

An education which is not *wholly* intent upon this, is as much beside the point, as an art of *Physick*, that had little or no regard to the restoration of health.

The youths that attended upon *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Epictetus*, were thus educated. Their every day lessons and instructions were so many lectures upon the nature of man, his true *end*, and the right use of his faculties; upon the immortality of the soul, its relation to God, the beauty of virtue, and

its agreeableness to the divine nature; upon the dignity of reason, the necessity of temperance, fortitude and generosity, and the shame and folly of indulging our passions.

Now as Christianity has, as it were, new created the *moral* and *religious* world, and set every thing that is reasonable, wise, holy and desirable, in its true point of light; so one would expect, that the education of youth should be as much better'd and amended by Christianity, as the *faith* and *doctrines* of Religion are amended by it.

As it has introduc'd such a *new state* of things, and so fully inform'd us of the *nature* of man, the *ends* of his creation, the state of his condition; as it has fix'd all our *goods* and *evils*, taught us the means of purifying our souls, pleasing God, and becoming eternally happy; one might naturally suppose, that every Christian Country abounded with *schools* for the teaching, not only a few questions and answers of a *Catechism*, but for the forming, training and practising youths in such an outward course of life, as the *highest* precepts, the *strictest* rules, and the *sublimest* doctrines of Christianity require.

An education under *Pythagoras*, or *Socrates*, had no other end, but to teach youth to *think*, *judge*, *act*, and follow such *rules* of life, as *Pythagoras* and *Socrates* us'd.

And is it not as reasonable to suppose, that a Christian education should have no other end, but to teach youth how to think, and
judge,

judge, and act, and live according to the *strictest laws* of Christianity?

At least one would suppose, that in all christian schools, the teaching youth to begin their lives in the *spirit* of Christianity, in such *severity* of behaviour, such *abstinence*, *sobriety*, *humility* and *devotion*, as Christianity requires, should not only be *more*, but an *hundred times* more regarded, than any, or all things else.

For our education should imitate our *guardian angels*, suggest nothing to our minds but what is *wise* and *holy*; help us to discover and subdue every *vain passion* of our hearts, and every *false judgment* of our minds.

And it is as *sober* and *reasonable* to expect and require all this benefit of a christian education, as to require that physick should strengthen all that is right in our nature, and remove that which is *sickly* and *diseas'd*.

But alas, our modern education is not of this kind.

The *first temper* that we try to awaken in children, is *pride*; as dangerous a passion as that of *lust*. We stir them up to vain thoughts of themselves, and do every thing we can, to puff up their minds with a sense of their own abilities.

Whatever way of life we intend them for, we apply to the *fire* and *vanity* of their minds, and exhort them to every thing from corrupt motives: We stir them up to action from principles of *strife* and *ambition*, from *glory*, *envy*, and a desire of distinction, that they
may

may excel others, and shine in the eyes of the world.

We repeat and inculcate these motives upon them, till they think it a part of their duty to be *proud, envious, and vain-glorious* of their own accomplishments.

And when we have taught them to scorn to be outdone by any, to bear no *rival*, to thirst after *every instance* of applause, to be content with nothing but the highest distinctions; then we begin to take comfort in them, and promise the world some mighty things from youths of such a glorious spirit.

If children are intended for *holy orders*, we set before them some eminent *orator*, whose *fine* preaching has made him the *admiration* of the age, and carry'd him through all the *dignities* and *preferments* of the Church.

We encourage them to have these *honours* in their eye, and to expect the reward of their studies from them.

If the youth is intended for a *trade*; we bid him look at all the rich men of the *same trade*, and consider how many now are carry'd about in their *stately coaches*, who began in the same low degree as he now does. We awaken his ambition, and endeavour to give his mind a *right turn*, by often telling him how very rich such and such a tradesman dy'd.

If he is to be a *lawyer*, then we set great *Counsellors*, *Lords Judges*, and *Chancellors*, before his eyes. We tell him what great *fees*, and great *applause* attend fine pleading. We
 exhort

exhort him to take fire at these things, to raise a spirit of emulation in himself, and to be content with nothing less than the highest honours of the *long Robe*.

That this is the nature of our *best education*, is too plain to need any proof; and I believe there are few parents, but would be glad to see these instructions daily given to their children.

And after all this, we complain of the effects of pride; we wonder to see *grown men* acted and govern'd by *ambition, envy, scorn*, and a *desire* of glory; not considering that they were all the time of their youth call'd upon to all their action and industry upon the same principles.

You teach a child to *scorn* to be outdone, to thirst for *distinction* and *applause*; and is it any wonder that he continues to act all his life in the same manner?

Now if a youth is ever to be so far a Christian, as to govern his heart by the *doctrines* of humility, I would fain know at *what time* he is to begin it; or if he is *ever* to begin it at all, why we train him up in tempers quite contrary to it?

How *dry* and *poor* must the doctrine of humility sound to a youth, that has been spurr'd up to all his industry by *ambition, envy, emulation*, and a desire of *glory* and *distinction*? And if he is not to act by these *principles* when he is a *man*, why do we call him to act by them in his *youth*?

Envy

Envy is acknowledg'd by all people to be the most *ungenerous, base* and *wicked* passion, that can enter into the heart of man.

And is this a temper to be instill'd, nourish'd and establish'd in the minds of young people?

I know it is said, that it is not *envy*, but *emulation*, that is intended to be awaken'd in the minds of young men.

But this is vainly said. For when children are taught to bear no *rival*, and to *scorn* to be outdone by any of their age, they are plainly and directly taught to be *envious*. For it is impossible for any one to have this *scorn* of being outdone, and this contention with *rivals*, without burning with *envy* against all those that seem to excel him, or get any distinction from him. So that what children are taught, is *rank envy*, and only cover'd with a name of a less odious sound.

Secondly, If *envy* is thus confessedly bad, and it be only *emulation* that is endeavour'd to be awaken'd in children, surely there ought to be *great care* taken, that children may know the one from the other. That they may abominate the one as a great *crime*, whilst they give the other admission into their minds.

But if this were to be attempted, the *fineness* of the distinction betwixt *envy* and *emulation*, would shew that it was easier to divide them in words, than to separate them in action.

For

For *emulation*, when it is defin'd in its best manner, is nothing else but a *refinement* upon envy, or rather the most *plausible part* of that black and venomous passion.

And though it is easy to separate them in the *notion*, yet the most acute *Philosopher*, that understands the art of distinguishing ever so well, if he gives himself up to *emulation*, will certainly find himself *deep* in *envy*.

For *envy* is not an *original* temper, but the natural, necessary, and unavoidable effect of emulation, or a desire of glory.

So that he who establishes the one in the minds of people, necessarily fixes the other there. And there is no other possible way of destroying envy, but by destroying emulation, or a desire of glory. For the one always rises and falls in proportion to the other.

I know it is said in defense of this method of education, that ambition, and a desire of glory, are necessary to excite young people to industry; and that if we were to press upon them the doctrines of humility, we should deject their minds, and sink them into *dulness* and *idleness*.

But these people who say this, don't consider, that this reason, if it has any strength, is full as strong against pressing the doctrines of humility upon *grown men*, lest we should deject their minds, and sink them into dulness and idleness.

For who does not see, that *middle-aged men* want as much the assistance of pride, ambi-
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tion, and vain-glory, to spur them up to action and industry, as *children* do? And it is very certain, that the precepts of humility are more contrary to the designs of such men, and more grievous to their minds, when they are pressed upon them, than they are to the minds of young persons.

This reason therefore that is given, why children should not be train'd up in the principles of true humility, is as good a reason why the same humility should never be requir'd of grown men.

Thirdly, Let those people, who think that children would be spoil'd, if they were not thus educated, consider this.

Could they think, that if any children had been educated by our blessed Lord, or his holy Apostles, that their minds would have been sunk into dulness and idleness?

Or could they think, that such children would not have been train'd up in the profoundest principles of a strict and true humility? Can they say that our blessed Lord, who was the meekest and humblest man that ever was on earth, was hinder'd by his humility from being the greatest example of worthy and glorious actions, that ever were done by man?

Can they say that his Apostles, who liv'd in the humble spirit of their master, did therefore cease to be laborious and active instruments of doing good to all the world?

A few

A few such reflections as these, are sufficient to expose all the poor pretences for an education in pride and ambition.

Patermus liv'd about *two hundred* years ago ; he had but one son, whom he educated himself in his own house. As they were sitting together in the *Garden*, when the child was *ten years* old, *Patermus* thus began to him.

The little time that you have been in the world, my child, you have spent wholly with me ; and my love and tenderness to you, has made you look upon me as your only friend and benefactor, and the cause of all the comfort and pleasure that you enjoy : Your heart, I know, would be ready to break with grief, if you thought this was the last day that I should live with you.

But, my child, tho' you now think yourself mighty happy, because you have hold of my hand, you are now in the hands, and under the tender care of a much greater father and friend than I am, whose love to you is far greater than mine, and from whom you receive such blessings as no mortal can give.

That God whom you have seen me daily worship, whom I daily call upon to bleis both you and me, and all mankind, whose wondrous acts are recorded in those Scriptures which you constantly read. That God who created the heavens and the earth, who brought a flood upon the old world, who sav'd *Noah* in the *Ark*, who was the God of *Abraham*,

ham, Isaac and Jacob, whom *Job* blessed and prais'd in the greatest afflictions, who deliver'd the *Israelites* out of the hands of the *Egyptians*, who was the protector of righteous *Joseph*, *Moses*, *Joshua*, and holy *Daniel*, who sent so many Prophets into the world, who sent his Son *Jesus Christ* to redeem mankind; this God who has done all these great things, who has created so many millions of men, who liv'd and died before you was born, with whom the spirits of good men that are departed this life, now live, whom infinite numbers of Angels now worship in Heaven; this great God who is the creator of worlds, of angels, and men, is your loving father and friend, your good creator and nourisher, from whom and not from me, you receiv'd your being ten years ago, at the time that I planted that little tender *Elm* which you there see.

I my self am not half the age of this *Shady Oak*, under which we sit; many of our fathers have sat under its boughs, we have all of us call'd it ours in our turn, tho' it stands, and drops its *masters*, as it drops its *leaves*.

You see, my son, this wide and large *Firmament* over our heads, where the *Sun* and *Moon*, and all the *Stars* appear in their turns. If you was to be carried up to any of these bodies at this vast distance from us, you would still discover others, as much above you, as the *Stars* that you see here are above the *Earth*. Were you to go up or down, *East* or
West,

West, North or South, you would find the same height without any *top*, and the same depth without any *bottom*.

And yet my child, so great is God, that all these bodies added together, are but as a *grain* of sand in his sight. And yet you are as much the care of this great God and Father of all *worlds* and all *spirits*, as if he had no son but you, or there were no creature for him to love and protect but you alone. He numbers the *hairs* of your head, watches over you sleeping and waking, and has preserv'd you from a thousand dangers, which neither you, nor I know any thing of.

How poor my power is, and how little I am able to do for you, you have often seen. Your late *sickness* has shewn you how little I could do for you in that state; and the frequent pains of your head are plain proofs, that I have no power to remove them.

I can bring you *food* and *medicines*, but have no power to turn them into your relief and nourishment; it is God alone that can do this for you.

Therefore, my child, fear, and worship, and love God. Your eyes indeed cannot yet see him, but every thing you see, are so many marks of his power and presence, and he is nearer to you, than any thing that you can see.

Take him for your *Lord*, and *Father*, and *Friend*, look up unto him as the fountain and cause of all the good that you have receiv'd

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through my hands, and reverence me only as the *bearer* and *minister* of God's good things unto you. And he that blessed my father before I was born, will bless you when I am dead.

Your youth and little mind is only yet acquainted with my family, and therefore you think there is no happiness out of it.

But, my child, you belong to a greater Family than mine, you are a young member of the family of this Almighty Father of all Nations, who has created infinite orders of Angels, and numberless generations of men, to be fellow-members of one and the same society in Heaven.

You do well to reverence and obey my authority, because God has given me power over you, to bring you up in his fear, and to do for you, as the holy fathers recorded in Scripture did for their children, who are now in rest and peace with God.

I shall in a short time die, and leave you to God, and your self, and if God forgiveth my sins, I shall go to his Son Jesus Christ, and live amongst Patriarchs and Prophets, Saints and Martyrs, where I shall pray for you, and hope for your safe arrival at the same place.

Therefore, my child, meditate on these great things, and your soul will soon grow great and noble by so meditating upon them.

Let your thoughts often leave these *gardens*, these *fields* and *farms*, to contemplate upon God and Heaven, to consider upon Angels,
and

and the spirits of good men living in light and glory.

As you have been us'd to look to me in all your actions, and have been afraid to do any thing, unless you first knew my will; so let it now be a rule of your life, to look up to God in all your actions, to do every thing in his fear, and to abstain from every thing that is not according to his will.

Bear him always in your mind, teach your thoughts to reverence him in every place, for there is no place where he is not.

God keepeth a *book* of life, wherein all the actions of all men are written; your name is there, my child, and when you die, this book will be laid open before men and angels, and according as your actions are there found, you will either be receiv'd to the happiness of those holy men who have died before you, or be turn'd away amongst wicked spirits, that are never to see God any more.

Never forget this book, my son, for it is written, it must be open'd, you must see it, and you must be try'd by it. Strive therefore to fill it with your good deeds, that the handwriting of God may not appear against you.

God, my child, is all *love*, and *wisdom*, and *goodness*; and every thing that he has made, and every action that he does, is the effect of them all. Therefore you cannot please God, but so far as you strive to walk in love, wisdom and goodness. As all wisdom, love and

goodness proceeds from God, so nothing but love, wisdom, and goodness can lead to God.

When you love that which God loves, you act with him, you joyn your self to him; and when you love what he dislikes, then you oppose him, and separate your self from him. This is the true and the right way; think what God loves, and do you love it with all your heart.

First of all, my child, worship and adore God, think of him magnificently, speak of him reverently, magnify his providence, adore his power, frequent his service, and pray unto him frequently and constantly.

Next to this, love your neighbour, which is all mankind, with such tendernefs and affection, as you love your self. Think how God loves all mankind, how merciful he is to them, how tender he is of them, how carefully he preserves them, and then strive to love the world, as God loves it.

God would have all men to be happy, therefore do you *will*, and desire the same. All men are great instances of divine love, therefore let all men be instances of your love.

But above all, my son, mark this, never do any thing through strife, or envy, or emulation, or vain-glory. Never do any thing in order to excell other people, but in order to please God, and because it is his will, that you should do every thing in the best manner that you can.

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For if it is once a pleasure to you to excell other people, it will by degrees be a pleasure to you, to see other people not so good as your self.

Banish therefore every thought of *self-pride* and *self-distinction*, and accustom your self to rejoice in all the excellencies and perfections of your fellow-creatures, and be as glad to see any of their good actions, as your own.

For as God is as well pleas'd with their well doings, as with yours, so you ought to desire, that every thing that is wise, and holy, and good, may be perform'd in as high a manner by other people, as by your self.

Let this therefore be your only motive and spur to all good actions, honest industry, and business, to do every thing in as perfect and excellent a manner as you can, for this only reason, because it is pleasing to God, who desires your perfection, and writes all your actions in a book. When I am dead, my son, you will be master of all my estate, which will be a great deal more, than the necessities of one family require. Therefore as you are to be charitable to the souls of men, and wish them the same happiness with you in heaven, so be charitable to their bodies, and endeavour to make them as happy as you upon earth.

As God has created all things for the common good of all men, so let that part of them which is fallen to your share, be employ'd as God would have all employ'd, for the common good of all.

Do good, my son, first of all to those that most deserve it, but remember to do good to all. The greatest sinners receive daily instances of God's goodness towards them, he nourishes and preserves them, that they may repent, and return to him; do you therefore imitate God, and think no one too bad to receive your relief and kindness, when you see that he wants it.

I am teaching you *Latin* and *Greek*, not that you should desire to be a great *Critick*, a fine *Poet*, or an eloquent *Orator*; I would not have your heart feel any of these desires, for the desire of these accomplishments, is a vanity of the mind, and the masters of them are generally vain men. For the desire of any thing that is not a real good, lessens the application of the mind after that which is so.

But I teach you these languages, that at proper times you may look into the history of past ages, and learn the methods of God's providence over the world. That reading the writings of the antient *Sages*, you may see how wisdom and virtue have been the praises of great men of all ages, and fortify your mind by their wise sayings.

Let truth and plainness therefore be the only ornament of your language, and study nothing but how to think of all things as they deserve, to chuse every thing that is best, to live according to reason and order, and to act in every part of your life in conformity to the will of God,

Study

Study how to fill your heart full of the love of God, and the love of your neighbour, and then be content to be no deeper a scholar, no finer a gentleman, than these tempers will make you. As true Religion is nothing else but simple Nature govern'd by right reason, so it loves and requires great plainness and simplicity of life. Therefore avoid all superfluous shews of finery and equipage, and let your house be plainly furnish'd with moderate conveniencies. Don't consider what your estate can afford, but what right reason requires.

Let your *dress* be sober, clean, and modest, not to set out the beauty of your person, but to declare the sobriety of your mind, that your outward garb may resemble the inward plainness and simplicity of your heart. For it is highly reasonable, that you should be *one man*, all of a piece, and appear outwardly such as you are inwardly.

As to your *meat* and *drink*, in them observe the *highest rules* of Christian temperance and sobriety; consider your body only as the servant and minister of your soul; and only so nourish it, as it may best perform an humble and obedient service to it.

But, my son, observe this as a most principal thing, which I shall remember you of, as long as I live with you.

Hate and despise all *human glory*, for it is nothing else but human folly. It is the great

test *snare*, and the greatest *betrayer* that you can possibly admit into your heart.

Love humility in all its instances, practise it in all its parts, for it is the noblest state of the soul of man; it will set your heart and affections right towards God, and fill you with every temper that is tender and affectionate towards men.

Let every day therefore be a day of humility, condescend to all the weakneſs, and infirmities of your fellow creatures, cover their frailties, love their excellencies, encourage their virtues, relieve their wants, rejoice in their prosperities, compassionate their distress, receive their friendship, overlook their unkindneſs, forgive their malice, be a ſervant of ſervants, and condescend to do the lowest offices to the lowest of mankind.

Aspire after nothing but your own purity and perfection, and have no ambition but to do every thing in ſo reasonable and religious a manner, that you may be glad that God is every where preſent, and ſees and obſerves all your actions. The greatest trial of humility, is an humble behaviour towards your equals in *age, eſtate, and condition* of life. Therefore be careful of all the motions of your heart towards theſe people. Let all your behaviour towards them be govern'd by unfeigned love. Have no deſire to put any of your equals below you, nor any anger at thoſe that would put themſelves above you. If they are proud, they are ill of a very bad diſtemper, let them therefore

therefore have your tender pity, and perhaps your meekness may prove an occasion of their cure. But if your humility should do them no good, it will however be the greatest good that you can do to your self.

Remember that there is but one man in the world, with whom you are to have perpetual contention, and be always striving to exceed him, and that is your self.

The time of practising these precepts, my child, will soon be over with you, the world will soon slip through your hands, or rather you will soon slip through it; it seems but the other day since I receiv'd these same instructions from my dear Father, that I am now leaving with you. And the God that gave me ears to hear, and a heart to receive what my Father said unto me, will, I hope, give you grace to love and follow the same instructions.

Thus did *Paternus* educate his son.

Can any one now think that such an education as this, would weaken and deject the minds of young people, and deprive the world of any worthy and reasonable labours?

It is so far from that, that there is nothing so likely to enoble, and exalt the mind, and prepare it for the most heroical exercise of all virtues.

For who will say, that a love of God, a desire of pleasing him, a love of our neighbour, a love of truth, of reason, and virtue, a contemplation of eternity, and the rewards of piety, are not stronger motives to great
and

and good actions, than a little uncertain popular praise.

On the other hand, there is nothing in reality that more weakens the mind, and reduces it to meanness and slavery, nothing that makes it less master of its own actions, or less capable of following reason, than a love of praise and honour.

For as praise and honour are often given to *things* and *persons*, where they are not due, as that is generally most prais'd and honour'd, that most gratifies the *humours*, *fashions*, and vicious *tempers* of the world: so he that acts upon the desire of praise and applause, must part with every other principle; he must say *black is white*, put *bitter* for *sweet*, and *sweet* for *bitter*, and do the meanest, basest things, in order to be applauded.

For in a corrupt world, as this is, worthy actions are only to be supported by their own worth, where instead of being prais'd and honour'd, they are most often reproach'd, and persecuted.

So that to educate children upon a motive of *emulation*, or a desire of *glory*, in a world where glory itself is *false*, and most commonly given *wrong*, is to destroy the natural integrity and fortitude of their minds, and give them a *biass* which will oftner carry them to base and mean, than great and worthy actions.

C H A P. XIX.

Shewing how the method of educating daughters, makes it difficult for them to enter into the spirit of Christian humility. How miserably they are injur'd and abus'd by such an education. The spirit of a better education represented in the character of Eusebia.

THAT turn of mind which is taught and encourag'd in the education of daughters, makes it exceeding difficult for them to enter into such a sense and practice of humility, as the spirit of Christianity requireth.

The right education of this *sex* is of the utmost importance to human life. There is nothing that is more desirable for the common good of all the world. For though *women* don't carry on the *trade* and *business* of the world, yet as they are *mothers*, and *mistresses* of families, that have for some time the care of the education of their children of both sorts, they are entrusted with that which is of the greatest consequence to human life. For this reason, *good* or *bad* women are likely to do as much good or harm in the world, as good or bad men in the greatest business of life,

For as the *health* and *strength*, or *weakness* of our bodies, is very much owing to *their*
methods

methods of treating us when we were young ; so the *soundness* or *folly* of our minds are not less owing to those *first tempers* and ways of thinking, which we eagerly receiv'd from the *love, tenderness, authority,* and constant *conversation* of our mothers.

As we call our first language our *mother-tongue*, so we may as justly call our first tempers our *mother-tempers* ; and perhaps it may be found more easy to forget the *language*, than to part entirely with those *tempers* which we learnt in the *nursery*.

It is therefore much to be lamented, that this *sex*, on whom so much depends, who have the first forming both of our *bodies* and our *minds*, are not only educated in *pride*, but in the *silliest* and most *contemptible* part of it.

They are not indeed suffer'd to dispute with us the proud *prizes* of *arts* and *sciences*, of *learning* and *elegance*, in which I have much suspicion they would *often* prove our superi-
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And what makes this matter still more to be lamented, is this, That women are not only spoil'd by this education, but we spoil that *part* of the world, which would otherwise furnish *most instances* of an eminent and exalted piety.

For I believe it may be affirmed, that for the most part there is a *finer sense*, a *clearer mind*, a *readier apprehension*, and *gentler dispositions* in that *sex*, than in the other.

All which tempers, if they were truly improved by *proper studies*, and *sober methods* of education, would in all probability carry them to greater heights of piety, than are to be found amongst the generality of men.

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It is therefore much to be lamented, that this *sex*, on whom so much depends, who have the first forming both of our *bodies* and our *minds*, are not only educated in *pride*, but in the *filliest* and most *contemptible* part of it.

They are not indeed suffer'd to dispute with us the proud *prizes* of *arts* and *sciences*, of *learning* and *eloquence*, in which I have much suspicion they would *often* prove our superiors ; but we turn them over to the study of *beauty* and *dress*, and the whole world conspires to make them think of nothing else. *Fathers* and *mothers, friends* and *relations*, seem to have no other wish towards the *little girl*, but that she may have a *fair skin, a fine shape, dress well,* and *dance* to admiration.

Now if a fondness for our *persons*, a desire of *beauty*, a love of *dress*, be a part of *pride* (as surely it is a most contemptible part of it) the first step towards a *woman's humility*, seems to require a *repentance* of her education.

For

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For this reason I speak to this matter with so much openness and plainness, because it is much to be lamented, that persons so *naturally* qualified to be great examples of *piety*, should by an erroneous education, be made *poor* and *gaudy* spectacles of the greatest vanity.

The *Church* has formerly had *eminent saints* in that sex; and it may reasonably be thought, that it is purely owing to their *poor* and *vain* education, that this honour of their sex is for the *most part* confin'd to *former* ages.

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The corruption of the world indulges them in great vanity, and mankind seem to consider them in no other view, than as so many *painted idols*, that are to allure and gratify their passions; so that if many women are *vain, light, giddy* creatures, they have this to excuse themselves, that they are not only such as their *education* has made them, but such as the *generality* of the world *allows* them to be.

But then they should consider, that the *friends* to their *vanity* are no friends of theirs; they should consider, that they are to live for *themselves*, that they have as great a share in the *rational nature* as men have; that they have as much *reason* to pretend, and as much *necessity* to aspire after the *highest accomplishments* of a Christian and solid virtue, as the *gravest* and *wisest* amongst Christian *Philosophers*.

They should consider, that they are *abus'd* and *injur'd*, and *betray'd* from their *only perfection*, whenever they are taught, that any thing is an *ornament* in them, that is not an ornament in the *wisest* amongst mankind.

It is generally said, that *women* are naturally of *little* and *vain minds*; but this I look upon to be as *false* and *unreasonable*, as to say, that *butchers* are naturally *cruel*; for as their cruelty is not owing to their *nature*, but to their *way* of life, which has changed their nature; so whatever *littleness* and *vanity* is to be observed in the minds of women, it is like the cruelty of *butchers*, a temper that is wrought

wrought into them by that life which they are *taught* and *accustomed* to lead.

At least thus much must be said, that we cannot charge any thing upon their *nature*, till we take care that it is not *perverted* by their education.

And on the other hand, if it were true, that they were thus naturally vain and light, then how much more blameable is that education, which seems contriv'd to *strengthen* and *increase* this folly and weakness of their minds?

For if it were a virtue in a woman to be proud and vain in herself, we could hardly take better means to raise this passion in her, than those that are now used in their education.

Matilda is a fine woman, of good *breeding*, great *sense*, and much *religion*. She has three daughters that are educated by herself. She will not trust them with any one else, or at any *school*, for fear they should learn any thing ill. She stays with the *Dancing-master* all the time he is with them, because she will hear every thing that is said to them. She has heard them read the Scriptures so often, that they can repeat great part of it without book: And there is scarce a good book of *devotion*, but you may find it in their *closets*.

Had *Matilda* liv'd in the first ages of Christianity, when it was practis'd in the *fulnes* and *plainness* of its doctrines, she had in all probability been one of its greatest saints.

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But as she was born in corrupt times, where she wants examples of Christian perfection, and hardly ever saw a piety higher than her own; so she has many defects, and communicates them all to her daughters.

Matilda never was *meanly* dress'd in her life; and nothing pleases her in *dress*, but that which is very *rich*, and *beautiful* to the eye.

Her daughters see her great zeal for Religion, but then they see an equal earnestness for all sorts of *finery*. They see she is not negligent of her *devotion*, but then they see her more careful to preserve her *complexion*, and to prevent those changes, which time and age threaten her with.

They are afraid to meet her, if they have miss'd the *Church*; but then they are more afraid to see her, if they are not *lac'd* as *straight* as they can possibly be.

She often shews them her *own picture*, which was taken when their father fell in love with her. She tells them, how *distracted* he was with passion at the *first sight* of her, and that she had never had so *fine* a *complexion*, but for the diligence of her good mother, who took exceeding care of it.

Matilda is so intent upon all the arts of improving their *dress*, that she has some *new fancy* almost every day, and leaves no ornament untry'd, from the richest *jewel* to the poorest *flower*. She is so nice and critical in her judgment, so sensible of the smallest error, that the *maid* is often forced to dress and undress

dress her daughters three or four times in a day, before she can be satisfy'd with it.

As to the *patching*, she reserves that to her self; for, she says, if they are not stuck on with judgment, they are rather a prejudice, than an advantage to the *face*.

The children see so plainly the *temper* of their mother, that they even affect to be *more pleas'd* with dress, and to be more fond of every little ornament, than they really are, merely to gain her favour.

They saw their eldest sister once brought to her *tears*, and her *perverseness* severely reprimanded, for presuming to say, that she thought it was better to cover the *neck*, than to go so *far naked* as the modern dress requires.

She stints them in their *meals*, and is very scrupulous of what they eat and drink, and tells them how many *fine shapes* she has seen spoil'd in her time for want of such care. If a *pimple* rises in their faces, she is in a great fright, and they themselves are as afraid to see her with it, as if they had committed some great sin.

Whenever they begin to look too *sanguine* and *healthful*, she calls in the assistance of the *doctor*; and if *physick*, or *issues*, will keep the complexion from inclining to *coarse* or *ruddy*, she thinks them well employ'd.

By this means they are *poor*, *pale*, *sickly*, *infirm* creatures, *vapour'd* through want of spirits, *crying* at the smallest accidents, *swooning* away at any thing that frights them, and

hardly able to bear the *weight* of their best cloaths.

The eldest daughter liv'd as long as she could under this discipline, and dy'd in the twentieth year of her age.

When her body was open'd, it appear'd that her *ribs* had grown into her *liver*, and that her other *entrails* were much hurt, by being *crush'd* together with her *stays*, which her mother had order'd to be twitch'd so strait, that it often brought tears into her eyes, whilst the maid was dressing her.

Her youngest daughter is run away with a *gamester*, a man of great beauty, who in *dressing* and *dancing* has no superior.

Matilda says, she should die with grief at this accident; but that her *conscience* tells her, she has contributed nothing to it her self. She appeals to their *closets*, to their books of devotion, to testify what care she has taken to establish her children in a life of solid piety and devotion.

Now though I don't intend to say, that no daughters are brought up in a *better way* than this, for I hope there are many that are; yet thus much I believe may be said, that the much greater part of them, are not brought up so well, or accustomed to so much Religion, as in the present instance.

Their minds are turn'd as much to the care of their beauty and dress, and the indulgence of vain desires, as in the present case, without having such rules of devotion to stand
against

against it. So that if *solid* piety, *humility*, and a *sober sense* of themselves, is much wanted in that sex, it is the plain and natural consequence of a vain and corrupt education.

And if they are often too ready to receive the first *fops*, *beauxs*, and fine *dancers*, for their husbands; 'tis no wonder they should like that in men, which they have been taught to admire in themselves.

And if they are often seen to lose that little Religion they were taught in their youth, 'tis no more to be wonder'd at, than to see a *little flower* choak'd and kill'd amongst *rank weeds*.

For *personal* pride, and *affectation*, a *delight* in beauty, and *fondness* of finery, are tempers that must either kill all Religion in the soul, or be themselves kill'd by it; they can no more thrive together, than *health* and *sickness*.

Some people that judge hastily, will perhaps here say, that I am exercising too great a severity against the sex.

But more reasonable persons will easily observe, that I entirely spare the *sex*, and only arraign their *education*; that I not only spare them, but plead their *interest*, assert their *honour*, set forth their *perfections*, commend their *natural* tempers, and only condemn that *education*, which is so *injurious* to their interests, so *debases* their honour, and *deprives*

them of the benefit of their *excellent* natures and tempers.

Their education, I profess, I cannot spare; but the only reason is, because it is their *greatest enemy*, because it deprives the world of so many *blessings*, and the Church of so many *saints*, as might reasonably be expected from persons, so form'd by their natural tempers to all goodness and tenderness, and so fitted by the clearness and brightness of their minds, to contemplate, love and admire every thing that is holy, virtuous and divine.

If it should here be said, that I even charge *too high* upon their *education*, and that they are not so *much* hurt by it, as I imagine:

It may be answer'd, that though I don't pretend to state the *exact degree* of mischief that is done by it, yet its plain and natural tendency to do harm, is sufficient to justify the most *absolute* condemnation of it.

But if any one would know, how *generally* women are hurt by this education; if he imagines there may be no personal pride, or vain fondness of themselves, in those that are *patch'd* and *dress'd* out with so much glitter of *art* and *ornament* :

Let him only make the following experiment where-ever he pleases.

Let him only acquaint any such woman with his opinion of her: I don't mean that he should tell her to her face, or do it in any
rude

rude publick manner; but let him contrive the most *civil, secret, friendly* way that he can think of, only to let her know his opinion, that he thinks she is neither *handsome*, nor *dresses* well, nor *becomes* her finery; and I dare say he will find there are but very few *fine dress'd* women, that will like him never the worse for his *bare opinion*, though known to none but themselves; and that he will not be long without seeing the *effects* of her resentment.

But if such an experiment would shew him that there are but few such women that could bear with his *friendship*, after they knew he had such an opinion of them, surely it is time to complain of, and accuse that *education*, which so *generally* corrupts their hearts.

For though it is hard to judge of the hearts of people, yet where they *declare* their *resentment*, and *uneasiness* at any thing, there they pass the judgment upon themselves. If a woman can't *forgive* a man who thinks she has no *beauty*, nor any *ornament* from her dress, there she *infallibly* discovers the *state* of her own heart, and is condemn'd by *her own*, and not another's judgment.

For we never are *angry* at others, but when their opinions of us are contrary to that which we have of our selves.

A man that makes no *pretences* to scholarship, is never angry at those that don't take him to be a *scholar*: So if a woman had no *opinion* of her own *person* and *dress*, she would

never be *angry* at those, who are of the *same opinion* with her self.

So that the general bad effects of this education are too much known, to admit of any reasonable doubt.

But how possible it is to bring up daughters in a more excellent way, let the following character declare.

Eusebia is a pious widow, well born, and well bred, and has a good estate for five daughters, whom she brings up as one entrusted by God, to fit five Virgins for the kingdom of Heaven. Her family has the same regulation as a *religious house*, and all its orders tend to the support of a constant regular devotion.

She, her *daughters*, and her *maids*, meet together at all the *hours of prayer* in the day, and chant Psalms, and other devotions, and spend the rest of their time in such good works, and innocent diversions, as render them fit to return to their *Psalms* and *Prayers*.

She loves them as her spiritual children, and they reverence her as their spiritual mother, with an affection far above that of the fondest friends.

She has divided part of her estate amongst them, that every one may be charitable out of their own stock, and each of them take it in their turns to provide for the *poor* and *sick* of the Parish.

Eusebia brings them up to all kinds of labour that are proper for women, as *sowing*,
knitting,

knitting, spinning, and all other parts of *housewifery*; not for their *amusement*, but that they may be serviceable to themselves and others, and be sav'd from those temptations which attend an idle life.

She tells them, she had rather see them reduced to the necessity of maintaining themselves by their own work, than to have riches to excuse themselves from labour. For though, says she, you may be able to assist the poor without your labour, yet by your labour you will be able to assist them more.

If *Eusebia* has liv'd as free from sin as it is possible for human nature, it is because she is always watching and guarding against *all instances* of pride. And if her virtues are stronger and higher than other people's, 'tis because they are all founded in a deep *humility*.

My children, says she, when your father dy'd, I was much pity'd by my friends; as having all the care of a family, and the management of an estate fallen upon me.

But my own grief was founded upon another principle; I was griev'd to see my self depriv'd of so faithful a friend, and that such an eminent example of Christian virtues, should be taken from the eyes of his children, before they were of an age to love and follow it.

But as to worldly cares, which my friends thought so heavy upon me, they are most of

them of our own making, and fall away as soon as we *know our selves*.

If a person in a *dream* is disturb'd with strange appearances, his trouble is over as soon as he is *awake*, and sees that it was the folly of a dream.

Now when a right knowledge of our selves enters into our minds, it makes as great a change in all our thoughts and apprehensions, as when we *awake* from the *wandrings* of a dream.

We acknowledge a man to be *mad*, or *melancholy*, who fancies himself to be *glass*, and so is afraid of stirring; or taking himself to be *wax*, dare not let the *Sun* shine upon him.

But, my children, there are things in the world which pass for *wisdom*, *politeness*, *grandeur*, *happiness*, and *fine breeding*, which shew as great *ignorance* of our selves, and might as justly pass for *thorough madness*, as when a man fancies himself to be *glass*, or *ice*.

A woman that dares not appear in the world without *fine cloaths*, that thinks it a happiness to have a face *finely colour'd*, to have a skin *delicately fair*, that had rather die than be reduc'd to poverty, and be forc'd to work for a poor maintenance, is as ignorant of her self to the full, as he that fancies himself to be *glass*.

For this reason, all my discourse with you, has been to acquaint you with your selves, and to accustom you to such books and devotions,

tions, as may best instruct you in this greatest of all knowledge.

You would think it hard, not to know the family into which you was born, what ancestors you were descended from, and what estate was to come to you. But, my children, you may know all this with exactness, and yet be as ignorant of your selves, as he that takes himself to be *wax*.

For though you were all of you born of my body, and bear your father's name, yet you are all of you *pure spirits*. I don't mean that you have not bodies that want *meat* and *drink*, and *sleep*, and *cloathing*, but that *all* that deserves to be called *you*, is nothing else but *spirit*. A being spiritual and rational in its nature, that is as contrary to all fleshly or corporeal beings, as *life* is contrary to *death*; that is made in the image of God, to live for ever, never to cease any more, but to enjoy *life*, and *reason*, and *knowledge*, and *happiness* in the presence of God, and the society of Angels, and glorious Spirits, to all eternity.

Every thing that you call yours, besides this spirit, is but like your *cloathing*; something that is only to be us'd for a while, and then to *end*, and *die*, and *wear away*, and to signify no more to you, than the *cloathing* and *bodies* of other people.

But, my children, you are not only in this manner *spirits*, but you are *fallen* spirits, that began your life in a state of corruption and
disor-

disorder, full of tempers and passions, that blind and darken the reason of your mind, and incline you to that which is hurtful.

Your bodies are not only *poor* and *perishing* like your cloaths, but they are like *infected cloaths*, that fill you with ill diseases and distempers, which oppress the soul with sickly appetites, and vain cravings.

So that all of us are like two beings, that have, as it were, two hearts within us; with the one we see, and taste, and admire reason, purity and holiness; with the other we incline to pride, and vanity, and sensual delights.

This internal war we always feel within us more or less; and if you would know the one thing necessary to all the world, it is this; to preserve and perfect all that is *rational, holy* and *divine* in our nature, and to mortify, remove and destroy all that *vanity, pride* and *sensuality*, which springs from the corruption of our state?

Could you think, my children, when you look at the world, and see what *customs, and fashions, and pleasures, and troubles, and projects, and tempers*, employ the hearts and time of mankind, that things were thus, as I have told you?

But don't you be affected at these things, the world is in a great *dream*, and but few people are awake in it.

We fancy that we fall into darkness, when we die; but alas, we are most of us in the dark 'till then; and the eyes of our souls only

ly then begin to see, when our bodily eyes are closing.

You see then your state, my children; you are to honour, improve and perfect the spirit that is within you, you are to prepare it for the kingdom of Heaven, to nourish it with the love of God, and of virtue, to adorn it with good-works, and to make it as holy and heavenly as you can. You are to preserve it from the errors and vanities of the world; to save it from the corruptions of the body, from those false delights, and sensual tempers, which the body tempts it with.

You are to nourish your spirits with pious readings, and holy meditations, with watchings, fastings, and prayers, that you may taste, and relish, and desire that eternal state, which is to begin when this life ends.

As to your bodies, you are to consider them as *poor, perishing* things, that are sickly and corrupt at present, and will soon drop into common dust. You are to watch over them as *enemies*, that are always trying to tempt and betray you, and so never follow their advice and counsel; you are to consider them as the *place* and *habitation* of your souls, and so keep them *pure*, and *clean*, and *decent*; you are to consider them as the servants and instruments of action, and so give them *food*, and *rest*, and *rayment*, that they may be strong and healthful to do the duties of a charitable, useful, pious life.

Whilst

Whilst you live thus, you live like yourselves; and whenever you have less regard to your souls, or more regard to your bodies, than this comes to; whenever you are more intent upon adorning your persons, than upon the perfecting of your souls, you are much more beside yourselves, than he, that had rather have a *lac'd coat*, than an healthful body.

For this reason, my children, I have taught you nothing that was dangerous for you to learn; I have kept you from every thing that might betray you into *weakness* and *folly*; or make you think any thing fine, but a *fine mind*; any thing happy, but the favour of God; or any thing desirable, but to do all the good you possibly can.

Instead of the vain, immodest entertainment of *Plays* and *Opera's*, I have taught you to delight in visiting the *sick* and *poor*. What *musick*, and *dancing*, and *diversions* are to many in the world, that prayers, and devotions, and *Psalms* are to you. Your hands have not been employ'd in plaiting the hair, and adorning your persons; but in making cloaths for the naked. You have not wasted your fortunes upon yourselves, but have added your labour to them, for to do more good to other people.

Instead of forc'd *shapes*, *patch'd faces*, *genteel airs*, and *affected motions*, I have taught you to *conceal* your bodies with *modest garments*, and let the world have nothing to view of
you,

you, but the *plainness*, the *sincerity*, and *humility* of all your behaviour.

You know, my children, the *high perfection*, and the *great rewards* of virginity; you know how it frees from worldly cares and troubles, and furnishes means and opportunities of higher advancements in a divine life; therefore love, and esteem, and honour virginity: bless God for all that glorious company of holy virgins, that from the beginning of Christianity have, in the several ages of the Church, renounced the cares and pleasures of matrimony, to be perpetual examples of solitude, contemplation, and prayer.

But as every one has their proper gift from God, as I look upon you all to be so many great blessings of a married state; so I leave it to your choice, either to do as I have done, or to aspire after higher degrees of perfection in a virgin state of life.

I desire nothing, I press nothing upon you, but to make the most of human life, and to aspire after perfection in whatever state of life you chuse.

Never therefore consider yourselves as persons that are to be *seen*, *admir'd* and *courted* by men; but as *poor sinners*, that are to save yourselves from the vanities and follies of a miserable world, by *humility*, *devotion*, and *self-denial*. Learn to live for your own sakes, and the service of God; and let nothing in the world be of any value with you, but that
which

which you can turn into a service to God, and a means of your future happiness.

Consider often how powerfully you are called to a virtuous life, and what great and glorious things God has done for you, to make you in love with every thing that can promote his glory.

Think upon the vanity and shortness of human life, and let death and eternity be often in your minds; for these thoughts will strengthen and exalt your minds, make you wise and judicious, and truly sensible of the littleness of all human things.

Think of the happiness of prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, who are now rejoicing in the presence of God, and see themselves possessors of eternal glory. And then think how desirable a thing it is, to watch and pray, and do good as they did, that when you dye you may have your lot amongst them.

Whether marry'd therefore, or unmarried, consider yourselves as mothers and sisters, as friends and relations to all that want your assistance; and never allow yourselves to be idle, whilst others are in want of any thing that your hands can make for them.

This useful, charitable, humble employment of yourselves, is what I recommend to you with great earnestness, as being a substantial part of a wise and pious life. And besides the good you will thereby do to other people,

people, every virtue of your own heart will be very much improv'd by it.

For next to *reading, meditation, and prayer*, there is nothing that so secures our hearts from foolish passions, nothing that preserves so holy and wise a frame of mind, as some *useful, humble* employment of ourselves.

Never therefore consider your labour as an *amusement*, that is to get rid of your time, and so may be as trifling as you please; but consider it as something that is to be serviceable to yourselves and others, that is to serve some sober ends of life, to save and redeem your time, and make it turn to your account, when the works of all people shall be try'd by fire.

When you was little, I left you to little amusements, to please yourselves in any things that were free from harm; but as you are now grown up to a knowledge of God, and yourselves; as your minds are now acquainted with the worth and value of virtue, and exalted with the great doctrines of Religion, you are now to do nothing as children, but despise every thing that is poor, or vain, and impertinent; you are now to make the labours of your hands suitable to the piety of your hearts, and employ yourselves for the same ends, and with the same spirit, as you *watch and pray*.

For if there is any good to be done by your labour, if you can possibly employ yourselves usefully to other people, how silly is it, how
con-

contrary to the wisdom of Religion, to make that a *mere amusement*, which might as easily be made an exercise of the *greatest charity*?

What would you think of the wisdom of him, that should employ his time in distilling of waters, and making liquors which no body could use, merely to amuse himself with the variety of their colour and clearness, when with less labour and expence he might satisfy the wants of those, who have nothing to drink?

Yet he would be as wisely employ'd, as those that are amusing themselves with such tedious works as they neither need, nor hardly know how to use when they are finish'd; when with less labour and expence they might be doing as much good, as he that is *cloathing* the naked, or *visiting* the sick.

Be glad therefore to know the wants of the poorest people, and let your hands be employ'd in making such *mean* and *ordinary* things for them, as their necessities require. By thus making your labour a gift and service to the poor, your ordinary work will be changed into a holy service, and made as acceptable to God, as your devotions.

And as charity is the greatest of all virtues, as it always was the *chief temper* of the greatest saints; so nothing can make your own charity more amiable in the sight of God, than this method of adding your labour to it.

The *humility* also of this employment will be as beneficial to you, as the charity of it.

It

It will keep you from all vain and proud thoughts of your own state and distinction in life, and from treating the poor as creatures of a different species. By accustoming yourselves to this labour and service for the poor, as the *representatives* of Jesus Christ, you will soon find your heart soften'd into the greatest meekness and lowliness towards them. You will reverence their estate and condition, think it an *honour* to serve them, and never be so pleas'd with yourself, as when you are *most humbly* employ'd in their service.

This will make you true disciples of your meek Lord and Master, who *came into the world not to be ministred unto, but to minister*; and tho' he was Lord of all, and amongst the creatures of his own making, yet was amongst them, *as one that serveth*.

Christianity has then had its most glorious effects upon your hearts, when it has thus changed your spirit, removed all the pride of life from you, and made you delight in humbling yourselves beneath the lowest of all your fellow-creatures.

Live therefore, my children, as you have begun your lives, in humble labour for the good of others; and let ceremonious visits, and vain acquaintances, have as little of your time as you possibly can. Contract no foolish friendships, or vain fondnesses for particular persons; but love them most, that most turn your love towards God, and your compassion towards all the world.

But above all, avoid the conversation of *fine-bred fops* and *beaux*, and hate nothing more than the idle discourse, the flattery and compliments of that sort of men; for they are the *shame* of their own *sex*, and ought to be the *abhorrence* of ours.

When you go abroad, let humility, modesty, and a decent carriage, be all the *state* that you take upon you; and let tenderness, compassion, and good nature, be all the *fine breeding* that you shew in any place.

If evil *speaking*, *scandal*, or *backbiting*, be the conversation where you happen to be, keep your heart and your tongue to yourself; be as much griev'd as if you was amongst cursing and swearing, and retire as soon as you can.

Though you intend to marry, yet let the time never come, till you find a man that has those perfections, which you have been labouring after yourselves; who is likely to be a friend to all your virtues, and with whom it is better to live, than to want the benefit of his example.

Love *poverty*, and reverence *poor people*; as for many reasons, so particularly for this, because our blessed Saviour was one of the number, and because you may make them all so many *friends* and *advocates* with God for you.

Visit and converse with them frequently; you will often find *simplicity*, *innocence*, *patience*, *fortitude*, and great piety amongst them; and

and where they are not so, your good example may amend them.

Rejoice at every opportunity of doing an humble action, and exercising the meekness of your minds; whether it be, as the Scripture expresses it, in *washing the saints feet*, that is, in waiting upon, and serving those that are below you; or in bearing with the haughtiness and ill-manners of those that are your equals, or above you. For there is nothing better than humility; it is the fruitful soil of all virtues; and every thing that is kind and good, naturally grows from it.

Therefore, my children, pray for, and practise humility, and reject every thing in *dress*, or *carriage*, or *conversation*, that has any appearance of pride.

Strive to do every thing that is praise-worthy, but do nothing in order to be praised; nor think of any reward for all your labours of love and virtue, till Christ cometh with all his holy angels.

And above all, my children, have a care of vain and proud thoughts of your own virtues. For as soon as ever people live different from the common way of the world, and despise its vanities, the devil represents to their minds the height of their own perfections; and is content they should excel in good works, provided that he can but make them proud of them.

Therefore watch over your virtues with a jealous eye, and reject every vain thought, as

you would reject the most wicked imagination; and think what a loss it would be to you, to have the fruit of all your good works devour'd by the vanity of your own minds.

Never therefore allow yourselves to despise those who do not follow your rules of life; but force your hearts to love them, and pray to God for them; and let *humility* be always *whispering* it into your ears, that you yourselves will fall from those rules to-morrow, if God should leave you to your own strength and wisdom.

When therefore you have spent days and weeks well, don't suffer your hearts to contemplate any thing as your own, but give all the glory to the goodness of God, who has carry'd you through such rules of holy living, as you were not able to observe by your own strength; and take care to begin the next day, not as proficient in virtue, that can do great matters, but as *poor beginners*, that want the daily assistance of God to save you from the *grossest sins*.

Your dear father was an humble, watchful, pious, wise man. Whilst his sickness would suffer him to talk with me, his discourse was chiefly about your education. He knew the benefits of humility, he saw the ruins which pride made in our sex; and therefore he conjur'd me with the tenderest expressions, to renounce the *fashionable ways* of educating daughters in *pride* and *softness*, in the care of their *beauty* and *dress*; and to bring you all up
in

in the *plainest, simplest* instances of an humble, holy, and industrious life.

He taught me an *admirable rule* of humility, which he practis'd all the days of his life; which was this; to let no morning pass, without thinking upon some *frailty* and *infirmity* of our own, that may put us to *confusion*, make us *blush inwardly*, and entertain a mean opinion of our selves.

Think therefore, my children, that the soul of your good father, who is now with God, speaks to you through my mouth; and let the double desire of your father, who is gone, and I, who am with you, prevail upon you to love God, to study your own perfection, to practise humility, and with innocent labour and charity, to do all the good that you can to all your fellow-creatures, 'till God calls you to another life.

Thus did the pious widow educate her daughters.

The spirit of this education speaks so plainly for its self, that, I hope, I need say nothing in its justification. If we could see it in life, as well as read of it in books, the world would soon find the happy effects of it.

A *daughter* thus educated, would be a blessing to any family that she came into; a fit companion for a wise man, and make him happy in the government of his family, and the education of his children.

And she that either was not inclin'd, or could not dispose of her self well in marriage,

would know how to live to great and excellent ends in a state of virginity.

A very ordinary knowledge of the *spirit* of Christianity, seems to be enough to convince us, that no education can be of true advantage to young women, but that which trains them up in *humble industry*, in *great plainness* of life, in *exact modesty* of dress, manners and carriage, and in *strict devotion*. For what should a Christian woman be, but a *plain, unaffected, modest, humble* creature, averſe to every thing in her *dress* and *carriage*, that can draw the eyes of beholders, or gratify the paſſions of lewd and amorous perſons?

How great a ſtranger muſt he be to the Goſpel, who does not know that it requires this to be the ſpirit of a pious woman?

Our bleſſed Saviour ſaith, *Whoſoever looketh upon a woman to luſt after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

St. Matth. v.
28.

Need an education which turns women's minds to the *arts* and *ornaments* of dress and beauty, be more ſtrongly condemn'd, than by theſe words? For ſurely, if the eye is ſo eaſily and dangerously betray'd, every *art* and *ornament* is ſufficiently condemn'd, that naturally tends to betray it.

And how can a woman of piety more juſtly abhor and avoid any thing, than that which makes her perſon more a *ſnare* and *temptation* to other people? If *luſt*, and *wanton eyes* are the death of the ſoul, can any women think them-

themselves innocent, who with naked breasts, patch'd faces, and every ornament of dress, invite the eye to offend?

And as there is no pretence for innocence in such a behaviour, so neither can they tell how to set any bounds to their guilt. For as they can never know how much, or how often they have occasion'd sin in other people, so they can never know how much guilt will be plac'd to their own account.

This one would think should sufficiently deter every pious woman from every thing that might render her the occasion of loose passions in other people.

St. Paul, speaking of a thing entirely *innocent*, reasons after this manner: *But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to those that are weak.—And through thy knowledge thy weak brother perish, for whom Christ died. But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*

1 Cor. viii.
9, 11.

Now if this is the spirit of Christianity; if it requires us to abstain from things thus lawful, innocent and useful, when there is any danger of betraying our weak brethren into any error thereby: Surely it cannot be reckon'd too *nice* or *needless* a point of conscience, for women to avoid such things, as are neither innocent nor useful, but *naturally* tend to

corrupt their own hearts, and raise ill passions in other people.

Surely every woman of christian piety ought to say, in the spirit of the Apostle, if *patching* and *paint*, or any *vain adorning* of my person, be a natural means of making weak, unwary eyes to offend, I will renounce all these arts as long as I live, lest I should make my fellow-creatures to offend.

I shall now leave this subject of *humility*; having said enough, as I hope, to recommend the necessity of making it the constant, chief subject of your devotion at this hour of prayer.

I have consider'd the nature and necessity of humility, and its great importance to a religious life. I have shewn you how many difficulties are form'd against it from our natural tempers, the spirit of the world, and the common education of both sexes.

These considerations will, I hope, instruct you how to form your prayers for it to the best advantage; and teach you the necessity of letting no day pass, without a serious earnest application to God, for the *whole spirit* of humility. Fervently beseeching him to fill every part of your soul with it, to make it the ruling, constant habit of your mind, that you may not only feel it, but feel all your other tempers arising from it; that you may have no thoughts, no desires, no designs, but such as are the true fruits of an humble, meek, and lowly heart.

That

That you may always appear poor, and little, and mean in your own eyes, and fully content that others should have the same opinion of you.

That the whole *course* of your life, your *expence*, your *house*, your *dress*, your manner of *eating*, *drinking*, *conversing*, and doing *every thing*, may be so many continual proofs of the true unfeigned humility of your heart.

That you may look for nothing, claim nothing, resent nothing; that you may go through all the actions and accidents of life calmly and quietly, as in the presence of God, looking wholly unto him, acting wholly for him; neither seeking vain applause, nor resenting neglects, or affronts, but doing and receiving every thing in the meek and lowly spirit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

C H A P. XX.

Recommending Devotion at twelve o'Clock, call'd in Scripture the sixth hour of the day. This frequency of Devotion equally desirable by all orders of people. Universal love is here recommended to be the subject of prayer at this hour. Of intercession, as an act of universal love.

IT will perhaps be thought by some people, that these hours of prayer come *too thick*; that they can only be observ'd by people of great leisure, and ought not to be *press'd* upon the generality of men, who have the *cares* of families, *trades* and *employments*; nor upon the *gentry*, whose *state* and *figure* in the world cannot admit of this frequency of Devotion. And that it is only fit for *Monasteries* and *Nunneries*, or such people as have no more to do in the world than they have.

To this it is answer'd,

First, That this method of Devotion is not *press'd* upon any sort of people, as *absolutely necessary*, but recommended to *all people*, as *the best*, the *happiest*, and most *perfect* way of life.

And if a great and exemplary Devotion is as much the greatest happiness and perfection
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of a *Merchant*, a *Soldier*, or a man of *Quality*, as it is the greatest happiness and perfection of the most *retir'd contemplative* life, then it is as proper to recommend it without any *abate-ments* to one order of men, as to another. Because happiness and perfection are of the same worth and value to all people.

The *Gentleman* and *Tradesman* may, and must spend much of their time differently from the pious *Monk* in the *cloyster*, or the contemplative *Hermit* in the *desart*: But then, as the *Monk* and *Hermit* lose the ends of retirement, unless they make it all serviceable to Devotion; so the *Gentleman* and *Merchant* fail of the greatest ends of a *social life*, and live to their loss in the world, unless Devotion be their *chief* and *governing* temper.

It is certainly very *honest* and *creditable* for people to engage in *trades* and *employments*; it is reasonable for *Gentlemen* to manage well their *estates* and *families*, and take such recreations as are proper to their state. But then every *Gentleman* and *Tradesman* loses the greatest happiness of his creation, is robb'd of something that is greater than all employments, distinctions and pleasures of the world, if he does not live more to *Piety* and *Devotion*, than to any thing else in the world.

Here are therefore no excuses made for men of *business* and *figure* in the world. *First*, Because it would be to excuse them from that which is the greatest end of living; and be
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only finding so many reasons for making them *less beneficial* to themselves, and *less serviceable* to God and the world.

Secondly, Because most men of business and figure engage *too far* in worldly matters; much farther than the reasons of human life, or the necessities of the world require.

Merchants and Tradesmen, for instance, are generally ten times farther engag'd in business than they need; which is so far from being a reasonable *excuse* for their want of time for Devotion, that it is their *crime*, and must be censur'd as a blameable instance of covetousness and ambition.

The *Gentry*, and people of *Figure*, either give themselves up to *State-employments*, or to the gratifications of their *passions*, in a life of *gaiety* and *debauchery*; and if these things might be admitted as allowable avocations from Devotion, Devotion must be reckon'd a poor circumstance of life.

Unless *Gentlemen* can shew that they have another God, than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; another Nature, than that which is deriv'd from *Adam*; another Religion than the Christian, 'tis in vain to plead their state, and dignity, and pleasures, as reasons for not preparing their souls for God, by a *strict* and *regular* Devotion.

For since Piety and Devotion are the *common unchangeable* means of saving all the souls in the world that shall be saved, there is no-
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thing left for the *Gentleman*, the *Soldier*, and the *Tradesman*, but to take care that their several states be, by care and watchfulness, by meditation and prayer, made states of an *exact* and *solid piety*.

If a *Merchant*, having forbore from too great business, that he might quietly attend on the service of God, should therefore dye worth *twenty*, instead of *fifty* thousand pounds, could any one say that he had mistaken his *calling*, or gone a *loser* out of the world?

If a *Gentleman* should have killed *fewer foxes*, been less frequent at *balls*, *gaming*, and *merry-meetings*, because staid parts of his time had been given to *retirement*, to *meditation* and *devotion*, could it be thought, that when he left the world, he would regret the loss of those hours that he had given to the care and improvement of his soul?

If a *Tradesman* by aspiring after Christian perfection, and retiring himself often from his business, should instead of leaving his children fortunes to spend in *luxury* and *idleness*, leave them to live by their own honest labour; could it be said, that he had made a *wrong use* of the world, because he had shewn his children, that he had more regard to that which is eternal, than to this which is so soon to be at an end?

Since therefore devotion is not only the best and most desirable practice in a *Cloyster*, but the best and most desirable practice of men, as men, and in *every state* of life, they that desire
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fire to be excus'd from it, because they are men of *figure*, and *estates*, and *business*, are no wiser than those that should desire to be excus'd from *health* and *happiness*, because they were men of *figure* and *estates*.

I can't see why every *Gentleman*, *Merchant*, or *Soldier*, should not put these questions seriously to himself:

What is the best thing for me to intend and drive at in all my actions? How shall I do to make the most of human life? What ways shall I wish that I had taken, when I am leaving the world?

Now to be thus wise, and to make thus much use of our reason, seems to be but a *small* and *necessary* piece of wisdom. For how can we pretend to sense and judgment, if we dare not seriously consider, and answer, and govern our lives by that which such questions require of us?

Shall a *Nobleman* think his birth too high a dignity to condescend to such questions as these? Or a *Tradesman* think his business too great, to take any care about himself?

Now here is desir'd no more devotion in any one's life, than the answering these *few questions*, requires.

Any devotion that is not to the greater advantage of him that uses it, than any thing that he can do in the *room* of it; any devotion that does not procure an *infinitely greater* good, than can be got by neglecting it, is freely yielded up, here is no demand of it.

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But if people will live in so *much ignorance*, as never to put these questions to themselves, but push on a blind life at all chances, in quest of they don't know what, nor why; without ever considering the worth, or value, or tendency of their actions, without considering what God, *reason, eternity*, and their own happiness require of them; it is for the honour of *devotion*, that none can neglect it, but those who are thus inconsiderate, who dare not enquire after that which is the best, and most worthy of their choice.

It is true, *Claudius*, you are a man of *figure and estate*, and are to act the part of such a station in human life; you are not call'd as *Elijah* was to be a Prophet, or as *St. Paul*, to be an Apostle.

But will you therefore not love yourself? Will you not seek and study your own happiness, because you are not call'd to preach up the same things to other people?

You would think it very absurd, for a man not to value his own *health*, because he was not a *Physician*; or the preservation of his *limbs*, because he was not a *bone-setter*. Yet it is more absurd for you, *Claudius*, to neglect the improvement of your soul in piety, because you are not an Apostle, or a Bishop.

Consider this text of Scripture,
If ye live after the flesh, ye shall dye; but if through the spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,

Rom. viii. 13;
14.

God, they are the sons of God. Do you think that this Scripture does not equally relate to all mankind? Can you find any exception here for men of *figure* and *estates*? Is not a *spiritual* and *devout* life here made the common condition, on which all men are to become *sons* of God? Will you leave *hours of prayer*, and rules of devotion, to particular states of life, when nothing but the same spirit of devotion can save you, or any man, from eternal death?

Consider again this text: *For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of*
 2 Cor. v. 10. *Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Now if your *estate* would excuse you from appearing before this judgment-seat; if your *figure* could protect you from receiving according to your works, there would be some pretence for your leaving devotion to other people. But if you, who are now thus distinguish'd, must then appear *naked* amongst *common souls*, without any other distinction from others, but such as your virtues or sins give you; does it not as much concern you, as any *Prophet*, or *Apostle*, to make the best provision for the best rewards at that great day?

Again, consider this doctrine of the Apostle:
 Rom. xiv. 7,
 8. *For none of us, that is, of us Christians, liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we dye,*

dye, we dye unto the Lord. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.

Now are you, *Claudius*, excepted out of the doctrine of this text? Will you, because of your *condition*, leave it to any particular sort of people, to *live* and *dye* unto Christ? If so, you must leave it to them, to be redeemed by the death and resurrection of Christ. For it is the express doctrine of the text, that for *this end* Christ dy'd and rose again, that none of us should live to himself. 'Tis not that Priests, or Apostles, or *Monks*, or *Hermits*, should live no longer to themselves; but that *none of us*, that is, no Christian of what state soever, should live unto himself.

If therefore there be any instances of piety, any rules of devotion, which you can neglect, and yet live as truly unto Christ, as if you observed them, this text calls you to no such devotion. But if you forsake such devotion, as you yourself know is expected from some *particular sorts* of people; such devotion as you know becomes people that live wholly unto Christ, that aspire after *great piety*; if you neglect such devotion for any *worldly consideration*, that you may live more to your own *temper* and *taste*, more to the *fashions* and *ways* of the world, you forsake the terms on which all Christians are to receive the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection.

Observe farther, how the same doctrine is taught by St. Peter; *As he which bath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*

1 Pet. i. 15. If therefore, *Claudius*, you are one of those that are here called, you see what it is that you are called to. It is not to have so much religion as suits with your temper, your business, or your pleasures; it is not to a particular sort of piety, that may be sufficient for Gentlemen of figure and estates; but it is, *first*, to be *holy, as he which bath called you is holy*; *secondly*, it is to be *thus holy* in all manner of conversation; that is, to carry this spirit and degree of holiness into every part, and thro' the whole form of your life.

And the reason the Apostle immediately gives, why this spirit of holiness must be the common spirit of Christians, as such, is very affecting, and such as equally calls upon all sorts of Christians. *Forasmuch as ye know, says he, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation—but with the precious blood of Christ, &c.*

As if he had said, Forasmuch as ye know ye were made capable of this state of holiness, enter'd into a society with Christ, and made heirs of his glory, not by any human means, but by such a mysterious instance of love, as infinitely exceeds every thing that can be thought of in this world; since God has redeemed you to himself, and your own happiness

ness at so *great a price*, how base and shameful must it be, if you don't henceforth devote yourselves wholly to the glory of God, and become holy, as he who hath called you is holy?

If therefore, *Claudius*, you consider your *figure* and *estate*; or if, in the words of the text, you consider your *gold* and *silver*, and the *corruptible things* of this life, as any reason why you may live to your own humour and fancy, why you may neglect a life of strict piety and great devotion; if you think any thing in the world can be an excuse for your not imitating the holiness of Christ in the whole *course* and *form* of your life, you make yourself as guilty, as if you should neglect the holiness of Christianity for the sake of *picking straws*.

For the greatness of this new state of life to which we are called in Christ Jesus, to be for ever as the Angels of God in heaven, and the greatness of the *price* by which we are made capable of this state of glory, has turned every thing that is *worldly*, *temporal*, and *corruptible* into an *equal littleness*; and made it as great baseness and folly, as great a contempt of the blood of Christ, to neglect *any degrees* of holiness, because you are a man of some *estate* and *quality*, as it would be to neglect it, because you had a fancy to *pick straws*.

Again; the same Apostle saith,
Know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in

1 Cor. vi. 19,
20.

you, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

How poorly therefore, *Claudius*, have you read the Scripture, how little do you know of Christianity, if you can yet talk of your *estate* and *condition*, as a pretence for a freer kind of life?

Are you any more *your own*, than he that has no estate or dignity in the world? Must *mean* and *little* people preserve their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost, by *watching*, *fasting*, and *prayer*; but may you indulge yours in *idleness*, in *lusts* and *sensuality*, because you have so much *rent*, or such a *title* of distinction? How poor and ignorant are such thoughts as these?

And yet you must either think thus, or else acknowledge, that the holiness of *Saints*, *Prophets*, and *Apostles*, is the holiness that you are to labour after with all the diligence and care that you can.

And if you leave it to others, to live in such piety and devotion, in such self-denial, humility and temperance, as may render them able to glorify God in their body, and in their spirit; you must leave it to them also, to have the benefit of the blood of Christ.

Again; the Apostle saith, *You know how*
1 Thess. ii. 11. *we exhorted, comforted, and charg-*
ed every one of you, that you would
walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his
kingdom and glory.

You

You perhaps, *Claudius*, have often heard these words, without ever thinking how much they requir'd of you. And yet you can't consider them, without perceiving to what an eminent state of holiness they call you.

For how can the holiness of the Christian life be set before you in higher terms, than when it is represented to you, as *walking worthy of God*? Can you think of any abatements of virtue, any neglects of Devotion, that are well consistent with a life, that is to be made worthy of God? Can you suppose that any man walks in this manner, but he that watches over all his steps; and considers how every thing he does, may be done in the spirit of holiness? And yet as high as these expressions carry this holiness, it is here plainly made the necessary holiness of all Christians. For the Apostle does not here exhort his fellow *Apostles* and *Saints* to this holiness, but he *commands* all Christians to endeavour after it, *We charged*, says he, *every one of you, that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.*

Again, St. Peter saith, *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it, as of the ability that God giveth; that God in all things may be glorify'd in Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. iv. 11.

Do you not here, *Claudius*, plainly perceive your high calling? Is he that speaketh, to have such regard to his words, that he appear to speak as by the direction of God? Is he

that giveth, to take care that he so giveth, that what he disposeth of may appear to be a gift that he hath of God? And is all this to be done, that God may be glorify'd in all things?

Must it not then be said, Has any man *Nobility*, *dignity* of State, or *figure* in the world? let him so use his *Nobility*, or *figure* of life, that it may appear he uses these as the gifts of God, for the greater setting forth of his Glory. Is there now, *Claudius*, any thing forc'd, or far-fetch'd in this conclusion? Is it not the plain sense of the words, that every thing in life is to be made a matter of holiness unto God? If so, then your *estate* and *dignity* is so far from excusing you from *great piety* and *holiness* of life, that it lays you under a greater necessity of living more to the glory of God, because you have more of his gifts that may be made serviceable to it.

For people therefore of *figure*, or *business*, or *dignity* in the world, to leave *great piety*, and *eminent devotion* to any particular orders of men, or such as they think have little else to do in the world, is to leave the kingdom of God to them.

For it is the very end of Christianity to redeem all orders of men into *one holy* society, that rich and poor, high and low, masters and servants, may in one and the same spirit of piety, become a *chosen generation*, a *royal Priesthood*, an *holy Nation*, a *peculiar People*,
that

that are to shew forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

Thus much being said to shew, that *great Devotion* and *Holiness* is not to be left to any particular sort of people, but to be the *common spirit* of all that desire to live up to the terms of common Christianity; I now proceed to consider the nature and necessity of *universal love*, which is here recommended to be the subject of your *Devotion* at this hour. You are here also call'd to *Intercession*, as the most proper exercise to raise and preserve that love.

By *intercession* is meant a praying to God, and interceding with him for our fellow-creatures.

Our blessed Lord hath recommended his love to us, as the pattern and example of our love to one another. As therefore he is continually making *intercession* for us all, so ought we to intercede and pray for one another.

A new commandment, saith he, *I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.*

The newness of this precept did not consist in this, that men were commanded to love one another; for this was an old precept, both of the law of *Moses*, and of nature. But it was new in this respect, that it was to imitate a new, and till then unheard-of ex-

ample of love; it was to love one another, as Christ had loved us.

And if men are to know that we are Disciples of Christ, by thus loving one another according to his new example of love, then it is certain, that if we are void of this love, we make it as plainly known unto men, that we are none of his Disciples.

There is no principle of the heart that is more acceptable to God, than an *universal* fervent love to all mankind, *wishing* and *praying* for their happiness; because there is no principle of the heart that makes us more like God, who is love and goodness it self, and created all beings for their enjoyment of happiness.

The greatest *Idea* that we can frame of God is, when we conceive him to be a Being of infinite love and goodness; using an infinite wisdom and power for the common good and happiness of all his creatures.

The highest notion therefore, that we can form of man is, when we conceive him as like to God in this respect as he can be; using all his finite faculties, whether of wisdom, power, or prayers, for the common good of all his fellow-creatures: Heartily desiring they may have all the happiness they are capable of, and as many benefits and assistances from him, as his state and condition in the world will permit him to give them.

And on the other hand, what a *baseness* and *iniquity* is there in all instances of *hatred*, *en-*
vy,

vy, *spight* and *ill-will*; if we consider, that every instance of them is so far acting in *opposition* to God, and intending *mischief* and *harm* to those creatures, which God *favours*, and *protects*, and *preserves*, in order to their happiness? An *ill-natur'd* man amongst God's creatures, is the most *perverse* creature in the world, acting contrary to that *love*, by which himself *subsists*, and which alone gives subsistence to all that variety of beings, that enjoy life in any part of the creation.

Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them.

Now though this is a Doctrine of *strict justice*, yet it is only an *universal love* that can comply with it. For as love is the *measure* of our acting towards our selves, so we can never act in the same manner towards other people, till we look upon them with that love with which we look upon our selves.

As we have no degrees of *spight*, or *envy*, or *ill-will* to our selves, so we cannot be dispos'd towards others as we are towards our selves, 'till we *universally* renounce all instances of *spight*, and *envy*, and *ill-will*, even in the *smallest* degrees.

If we had any imperfection in our *eyes*, that made us see *any one* thing wrong, for the same reason they would shew us an hundred things wrong.

So if we have any temper of our hearts, that makes us *envious*, or *spightful*, or *ill-natur'd* towards *any one* man, the same tem-

per will make us envious, and spiteful, and ill-natur'd towards a great many more.

If therefore we desire this divine virtue of love, we must exercise and practise our hearts in the love of *all*, because it is not *Christian* love, till it is the love of *all*.

If a man could keep this whole law of love, and yet offend in *one point*, he would be guilty of all. For as one *allow'd* instance of injustice destroys the justice of all our other actions, so one allow'd instance of envy, spite, and ill-will, renders all our other acts of benevolence and affection nothing worth.

Acts of love that proceed not from a principle of *universal love*, are but like acts of justice, that proceed from a heart not dispos'd to *universal justice*.

A love which is not universal, may indeed have *tenderness* and *affection*, but it hath nothing of *righteousness* or *piety* in it; it is but humour, and temper, or interest, or such a love as *Publicans* and *Heathens* practise.

All particular *envies* and *spights*, are as plain departures from the spirit of Christianity, as any particular acts of injustice. For it is as much a law of Christ, to treat every body as your *neighbour*, and to love your neighbour as *your self*, as 'tis a law of Christianity, to abstain from *theft*.

Now the noblest motive to this universal tenderness and affection, is founded in this Doctrine, *God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God.*

Who

Who therefore, whose heart has any tendency towards God, would not aspire after this divine temper, which so changes and exalts our nature into an union with him?

How should we rejoice in the exercise and practice of this love, which so often as we feel it, is so often an assurance to us, that God is in us, that we act according to his spirit, who is love it self? But we must observe, that love has then only this mighty power of uniting us to God, when it is so *pure* and *universal*, as to imitate that love, which God beareth to all his creatures.

God willeth the happiness of all beings, though it is no happiness to himself. Therefore we must desire the happiness of all beings, though no happiness cometh to us from it.

God equally delighteth in the perfections of all his creatures, therefore we should rejoice in those perfections, where-ever we see them, and be as glad to have other people perfect as our selves.

As God forgiveth all, and giveth Grace to all, so we should forgive all those injuries and affronts which we receive from others, and do all the good that we can to them.

God almighty, besides his own great example of love, which ought to draw all his creatures after it, has so provided for us, and made our happiness so *common* to us all, that we have no occasion to envy or hate one another.

For

For we cannot stand in one anothers way, or by enjoying any particular good, keep another from his full share of it.

As we cannot be happy, but in the enjoyment of God, so we cannot rival, or rob one another of this happiness.

And as to other things, the *enjoyments* and *prosperities* of this life, they are so little in themselves, so foreign to our happiness, and, generally speaking, so *contrary* to that which they appear to be, that they are no foundation for envy, or spight, or hatred.

How silly would it be to envy a man, that was drinking poison out of a *golden* cup? And yet who can say, that he is acting wiser than thus, when he is envying any instance of worldly greatness?

How many *saints* has adversity sent to Heaven? And how many poor sinners has prosperity plung'd into everlasting misery? A man seems then to be in the most glorious state, when he has conquer'd, disgrac'd, and humbled his enemy; though it may be, that same conquest has sav'd his adversary, and undone himself.

This man had perhaps never been debauch'd, but for his *fortune* and *advancement*; *that* had never been pious, but through his *poverty* and *disgrace*.

She that is envy'd for her beauty, may perchance owe all her *misery* to it; and *another* may be for ever happy, for having had no admirers of her *person*.

One

One man succeeds in every thing, and so loses all: *Another* meets with nothing but crosses and disappointments, and thereby gains more than all the world is worth.

This *Clergyman* may be undone by his being made a *Bishop*; and *that* may save both himself and others, by being fix'd to his first *poor vicaridge*.

How envy'd was *Alexander* when conquering the world, he built *towns*, set up his *statues*, and left marks of his glory in so many kingdoms!

And how despis'd was the poor preacher *St. Paul* when he was *beaten with rods*! And yet how strangely was the world mistaken in their judgment! How much to be envy'd was *St. Paul*! How much to be pity'd was *Alexander*!

These few reflections sufficiently shew us, that the different conditions of this life have nothing in them to excite our uneasy passions, nothing that can reasonably interrupt our love and affection to one another.

To proceed now to another motive to this *universal* love.

Our power of doing *external acts* of love and goodness, is often very narrow and restrain'd. There are, it may be, but few people to whom we can contribute any worldly relief.

But though our outward means of doing good are often thus limited, yet if our hearts are but full of love and goodness, we get as
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it were an infinite power; because God will attribute to us those good works, those acts of love, and tender charities, which we sincerely desir'd, and would gladly have perform'd, had it been in our power.

You cannot heal all the *sick*, relieve all the *poor*; you cannot comfort all in distress, nor be a father to all the fatherless. You cannot, it may be, deliver many from their misfortunes, or teach them to find comfort in God.

But if there is a love and tenderness in your heart, that *delights* in these good works, and *excites* you to do *all* that you can: If your love has *no bounds*, but continually *wishes* and *prays* for the relief and happiness of all that are in distress, you will be received by God as a benefactor to those, who have had nothing from you but your *good will*, and tender affections.

You cannot build *hospitals* for the *incurable*; you cannot erect *monasteries* for the education of persons in holy *solitude*, continual *prayer* and *mortification*; but if you join in your heart with those that do, and thank God for their pious designs; if you are a friend to these great friends to mankind, and rejoice in their eminent virtues, you will be received by God as a sharer of such good works as, though they had none of your *hands*, yet had *all* your *heart*:

This consideration surely is sufficient to make us look to, and watch over our hearts with all diligence; to study the improvement of our *inward tempers*, and aspire after every
height

height and perfection of a loving, charitable, and benevolent mind.

And on the other hand, we may hence learn the great evil and mischief of all *wrong turns* of mind, of *envy*, *spight*, *hatred*, and *ill-will*. For if the goodness of our hearts will entitle us to the reward of good actions, which we never performed; it is certain that the badness of our hearts, our envy, ill-nature, and hatred, will bring us under the guilt of actions that we have never committed.

As he that lusteth after a woman shall be reckon'd an adulterer, though he has only committed the crime in his heart; so the malicious, spightful, ill-natur'd man, that only *secretly* rejoices at evil, shall be reckon'd a *murderer*, though he has shed no blood.

Since therefore our hearts, which are always naked and open to the eyes of God, give such an exceeding extent and increase either to our virtues or vices, it is our *best* and *greatest* business to govern the motions of our hearts, to watch, correct, and improve the inward state and temper of our souls.

Now there is nothing that so much exalts our souls, as this heavenly love; it cleanses and purifies like a holy fire, and all ill tempers fall away before it. It makes room for all virtues, and carries them to their greatest height. Every thing that is good and holy grows out of it, and it becomes a continual source of all holy desires, and pious practices.

By

By love, I don't mean any *natural tenderness*, which is more or less in people, according to their constitutions; but I mean a *larger principle* of the soul, founded in *reason* and *piety*, which makes us tender, kind, and benevolent to all our fellow-creatures, as creatures of God, and for his sake.

It is this love that loves all things in God, as his creatures, as the images of his power, as the creatures of his goodness, as parts of his family, as members of his society, that becomes a holy principle of all great and good actions.

The love therefore of our neighbour is only a branch of our love to God. For when we love God with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our strength, we shall necessarily love those beings that are so nearly related to God, that have every thing from him, and are created by him, to be objects of his own eternal love. If I hate or despise any one man in the world, I hate something that God cannot hate, and despise that which he loves.

And can I think that I love God with all my heart, whilst I hate that which belongs only to God, which has no other master but him, which bears his image, is part of his family, and exists only by the continuance of his love towards it?

It was the impossibility of this that made St. John say, *That if any man saith, he loveth God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.*

These

These reasons sufficiently shew us, that no love is *holy*, or *religious*, till it becomes *universal*.

For if Religion requires me to love all persons, as God's creatures, that belong to him, that bear his image, enjoy his protection, and make parts of his family and household; if these are the great and necessary reasons why I should live in love and friendship with any one man in the world, they are the same great and necessary reasons why I should live in love and friendship with every man in the world; and consequently I offend against *all these reasons*, and break through all these *ties* and *obligations*, whenever I want love towards any one man. The sin therefore of hating or despising any one man, is like the sin of hating all God's creation; and the necessity of loving any one man, is the same necessity of loving every man in the world. And though many people may appear to us ever so sinful, odious, or extravagant in their conduct, we must never look upon that as the least motive for any contempt or disregard of them; but look upon them with the greater compassion, as being in the most pitiable condition that can be.

As it was the Sins of the World, that made the Son of God become a compassionate, suffering Advocate for all mankind; so no one is of the Spirit of Christ, but he that has the *utmost compassion* for sinners. Nor is there any greater sign of your own perfection, than when

you find yourself all love and compassion towards them that are very weak and defective. And on the other hand, you have never less reason to be pleas'd with yourself, than when you find yourself most angry and offended at the behaviour of others. All sin is certainly to be hated and abhorred where-ever it is; but then we must set ourselves against sin, as we do against *sickness* and *diseases*, by shewing ourselves tender and compassionate to the *sick* and *diseased*.

All other hatred of sin, which does not fill the heart with the *softest*, *tenderest* affections towards persons miserable in it, is the servant of sin at the same time that it seems to be hating it.

And there is no temper which even good men ought more carefully to watch and guard against than this. For it is a temper that lurks and hides itself under the cover of many virtues, and by being unsuspected does the more mischief.

A man naturally fancies, that it is his own exceeding love of virtue that makes him not able to bear with those that want it. And when he *abhors* one man, *despises* another, and can't bear the *name* of a third, he supposes it all to be a proof of his own *high sense* of virtue, and *just hatred* of sin.

And yet one would think, that a man needed no other cure for this temper, than this one reflection:

That

That if this had been the *Spirit* of the Son of God, if he had hated sin in *this manner*, there had been no redemption of the World: That if God had hated sinners in this manner day and night, the world itself had ceased long ago.

This therefore we may take for a certain rule, that the more we partake of the divine nature, the more improved we are ourselves, and the higher our sense of virtue is, the more we shall pity and compassionate those that want it. The sight of such people will then, instead of raising in us a haughty contempt, or peevish indignation towards them, fill us with such bowels of compassion, as when we see the miseries of an *hospital*.

That the follies therefore, crimes, and ill behaviour of our fellow-creatures, may not lessen that love and tenderness which we are to have for all mankind, we should often consider the reasons on which this duty of love is founded.

Now we are to love our neighbour, that is, all mankind, not because they are wise, holy, virtuous, or well-behav'd; for all mankind neither ever was, nor ever will be so; therefore it is certain, that the reason of our being obliged to love them, cannot be founded in their virtue.

Again; if their virtue or goodness were the reason of our being oblig'd to love people, we should have no *rule* to proceed by; because tho' some peoples virtues or vices are very no-

torious, yet, generally speaking, we are but very ill judges of the virtue and merit of other people.

Thirdly, We are sure that the virtue or merit of persons, is not the reason of our being oblig'd to love them, because we are commanded to pay the highest instances of love to our worst enemies; we are to love, and bless, and pray for those that most injuriously treat us. This therefore is demonstration, that the merit of persons is not the reason on which our obligation to love them is founded.

Let us farther consider, what that love is, which we owe to our neighbour. It is to love him as ourselves, that is, to have all those sentiments towards him, which we have towards ourselves; to wish him every thing that we may lawfully wish to ourselves; to be glad of every good, and sorry for every evil that happens to him; and to be ready to do him all such acts of kindness, as we are always ready to do to ourselves.

This love therefore, you see, is nothing else but a love of *benevolence*; it requires nothing of us, but such *good wishes, tender affections*, and such acts of *kindness*, as we shew to ourselves.

This is all the love that we owe to the best of men; and we are never to want any degree of this love to the worst, or most unreasonable man in the world.

Now

Now what is the reason why we are to love every man in this manner? It is answer'd, that our obligation to love all men in this manner, is founded upon many reasons.

First, Upon a reason of *equity*; for if it is *just*, to love our selves in this manner, it must be *unjust* to deny any degree of this love to others, because every man is so exactly of the same nature, and in the same condition as our selves.

If therefore your own crimes and follies do not lessen your obligation to seek your *own* good, and wish *well* to your self; neither do the follies and crimes of your neighbour, lessen your obligation to wish and seek the good of your neighbour.

Another reason for this love, is founded in the authority of God, who has commanded us to love every man as our self.

Thirdly, We are oblig'd to this love, in imitation of God's goodness, that we may be children of our Father which is in Heaven, who willeth the happiness of all his creatures, and maketh his Sun to rise on the evil, and on the good.

Fourthly, Our redemption by Jesus Christ, calleth us to the exercise of this love, who came from Heaven, and laid down his life, out of love to the whole sinful world.

Fifthly, By the command of our Lord and Saviour, who has requir'd us to love one another, as he has loved us.

These are the great, perpetual reasons, on which our obligation to love all mankind as our selves, is founded.

These reasons never vary, or change, they always continue in their full force; and therefore equally oblige at all times, and in regard to all persons.

God loves us, not because we are wise, and good, and holy, but in pity to us, because we want this happiness: He loves us, in order to make us good. Our love therefore must take this course; not looking for, or requiring the merit of our brethren, but pitying their disorders, and wishing them all the good that they want, and are capable of receiving.

It appears now plainly from what has been said, that the love which we owe to our brethren, is only a love of *benevolence*. *Secondly*, That this duty of benevolence is founded upon such reasons as never vary or change; such as have no dependance upon the *qualities* of persons. From whence it follows, that it is the same *great sin*, to want this love to a bad man, as to want it to a good man. Because he that denies any of this benevolence to a bad man, offends against all the *same reasons* of love, as he does that denies any benevolence to a good man: And consequently it is the same sin.

When

When therefore, you let loose any ill-natur'd passion, either of hatred or contempt towards (as you suppose) an ill man, consider what you would think of another, that was doing the same towards a good man, and be assur'd that you are committing the same sin.

You will perhaps say, How is it possible to love a good and a bad man in the same degree?

Just as it's possible to be as *just* and *faithful* to a good man, as to an evil man. Now are you in any difficulty about performing *justice* and *faithfulness* to a bad Man? Are you in any doubts, whether you need be so *just* and *faithful* to him, as you need be to a good man? Now why is it, that you are in no doubt about it? 'Tis because you know, that justice and faithfulness are founded upon reasons that never *vary* or *change*, that have no dependance upon the *merits* of men, but are founded in the nature of things, in the laws of God, and therefore are to be observ'd with an equal exactness towards good and bad men.

Now do but think thus justly of charity, or love to your neighbour, that it is founded upon reasons, that *vary* not, that have no dependance upon the *merits* of men, and then you will find it as possible to perform the same *exact charity*, as the same *exact justice* to all men, whether good or bad.

You will perhaps farther ask, if you are not to have a *particular esteem, veneration and reverence* for good men? It is answer'd; Yes. But then this *high esteem and veneration*, is a thing very different from that love of *benevolence* which we owe to our neighbour.

The high esteem and veneration which you have for a man of eminent piety, is no act of charity to him; it is not out of pity and compassion that you so reverence him, but it is rather an act of charity to your self, that such esteem and veneration may excite you to follow his example.

You may and ought to love, like, and approve the life which the good man leads; but then this is only the loving of virtue, where-ever we see it. And we don't love virtue with the love of benevolence, as any thing that wants our *good wishes*, but as something that is our proper good.

The whole of the matter is this. The *actions* which you are to *love, esteem, and admire*, are the actions of good and pious men; but the *persons* to whom you are to do all the good you can, in all sorts of kindness and compassion, are all persons, whether good or bad.

This distinction betwixt love of benevolence, and esteem or veneration, is very plain and obvious. And you may perhaps still better see the plainness and necessity of it, by this following instance.

No

No man is to have a *high esteem*, or *honour* for his own accomplishments, or behaviour; yet every man is to love himself, that is, to wish well to himself; therefore this distinction betwixt love and esteem, is not only plain, but very necessary to be observ'd.

Again, if you think it hardly possible to dislike the actions of unreasonable men, and yet have a true love for them: Consider this with relation to your self.

It is very possible, I hope, for you not only to dislike, but to *detest* and *abhor* a great many of your own past actions, and to accuse your self of *great folly* for them. But do you then lose any of those tender sentiments towards your self, which you us'd to have? Do you then cease to wish well to your self? Is not the love of your self as strong then, as at any other time?

Now what is thus possible with relation to our selves, is in the same manner possible with relation to others. We may have the highest good wishes towards them, desiring for them every good that we desire for our selves, and yet at the same time dislike their way of life.

To proceed; all that love which we may justly have for our selves, we are in *strict justice* oblig'd to exercise towards all other men; and we offend against the great law of our nature, and the greatest laws of God, when our tempers towards others are different from those which we have towards our selves.

Now that *self-love* which is *just* and *reasonable*, keeps us constantly *tender*, *compassionate*, and *well-affected* towards our selves; if therefore you don't feel these kind dispositions towards all other people, you may be assur'd, that you are not in that state of charity, which is the very life and soul of christian piety.

You know how it hurts you, to be made the *jest* and *ridicule* of other people; how it grieves you to be *robb'd* of your reputation, and *depriv'd* of the favourable opinion of your neighbours: If therefore you expose others to *scorn* and *contempt* in *any* degree; if it pleases you to see or hear of their *frailties* and *infirmities*; or if you are only *loth* to conceal their faults, you are so far from loving such people as your self, that you may be justly suppos'd to have as much hatred for them, as you have love for your self. For such tempers are as truly the proper fruits of hatred, as the contrary tempers are the proper fruits of love.

And as it is a certain sign that you love your self, because you are tender of every thing that concerns you; so it is as certain a sign that you hate your neighbour, when you are pleas'd with any thing that hurts him.

But now, if the want of a *true* and *exact* charity be so great a want, that, as St. Paul saith, it renders our greatest virtues but empty sounds, and *tinkling cymbals*, how highly does it concern us to study every art, and practise every method of raising our souls to
this

this state of charity? It is for this reason, that you are here desir'd, not to let this hour of prayer pass, without a full and solemn supplication to God, for all the instances of an universal love and benevolence to all mankind.

Such daily constant devotion, being the only likely means of preserving you in such a state of love, as is necessary to prove you to be a true follower of Jesus Christ.

C H A P. XXI.

Of the necessity and benefit of Intercession, consider'd as an exercise of universal love. How all orders of men are to pray and intercede with God for one another. How naturally such intercession amends and reforms the hearts of those that use it.

TH A T intercession is a great and necessary part of christian Devotion, is very evident from Scripture.

The first followers of Christ seem to support all their love, and to maintain all their intercourse and correspondence, by mutual prayers with one another.

St. Paul, whether he writes to churches, or particular persons, shews his *intercession* to be perpetual for them, that they are the constant subject of his prayers.

Thus

Thus to the *Philippians*, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Phil. i. 4, 5. Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy. Here we see, not only a continual intercession, but perform'd with so much gladness, as shews that it was an exercise of love, in which he highly rejoic'd.

His Devotion had also the same care for particular persons; as appears by the following passage. I thank my God, whom I serve from my fore-fathers, with a pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day. How holy an acquaintance and friendship was this, how worthy of persons that were rais'd above the world, and related to one another, as new members of a kingdom of heaven!

Apostles and great Saints did not only thus benefit, and bless particular Churches, and private persons; but they themselves also received graces from God by the prayers of others. Thus saith St. Paul to the *Corinthians*, You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf. 2 Cor. i. 11.

This was the *antient friendship* of Christians, uniting and cementing their hearts, not by worldly considerations, or human passions, but by the mutual communication of spiritual
bles.

blessings, by prayers and thanksgivings to God for one another.

It was this holy intercession that rais'd Christians to such a state of mutual love, as far exceeded all that had been prais'd and admir'd in human friendship. And when the same spirit of *intercession* is again in the world, when Christianity has the same power over the hearts of people, that it then had, this holy friendship will be again in fashion, and Christians will be again the wonder of the world, for that exceeding love which they bear to one another.

For a *frequent* intercession with God, earnestly beseeching him to forgive the sins of all mankind, to bless them with his providence, enlighten them with his Spirit, and bring them to everlasting happiness, is the divinest exercise that the heart of man can be engaged in.

Be daily therefore on your knees in a solemn, deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others in such *forms*, with such *length*, *importunity*, and *earnestness*, as you use for yourself; and you will find all *little, ill-natur'd* passions dye away, your heart grow *great* and *generous*, delighting in the common happiness of others, as you used only to delight in your own.

For he that daily prays to God, that all men may be happy in heaven, takes the likeliest way to make him wish for, and delight in their happiness on earth. And it is hardly possible

possible for you to beseech and intreat God to make any one happy in the highest enjoyments of his glory to all eternity, and yet be troubled to see him enjoy the much smaller gifts of God in this short and low state of human life.

For how strange and unnatural would it be, to pray to God to grant *health* and a *longer* life to a *sick man*, and at the same time to *envy* him the poor pleasure of *agreeable medicines*?

Yet this would be no more strange, or unnatural, than to pray to God that your neighbour may enjoy the *highest* degrees of his mercy and favour, and yet at the same time envy him the little *credit* and *figure* he hath amongst his fellow-creatures.

When therefore you have once habituated your heart to a serious performance of this holy intercession, you have done a great deal to render it incapable of *spight* and *envy*, and to make it *naturally* delight in the happiness of all mankind.

This is the natural effect of a *general intercession* for all mankind. But the greatest benefits of it are then receiv'd, when it descends to such *particular* instances, as our *state* and *condition* in life more particularly require of us.

Though we are to treat all mankind as *neighbours* and *brethren*, as any occasion offers; yet as we can only live in the actual society of a few, and are by our state and condition more particularly *related* to some than others; so
when

when our intercession is made an exercise of love and care for those amongst whom our *lot* is fallen, or who belong to us in a *nearer relation*, it then becomes the greatest benefit to ourselves, and produces its best effects in our own hearts.

If therefore you should always change and alter your intercessions, according as the *needs* and *necessities* of your *neighbours* or *acquaintance* seem to require; beseeching God to deliver them from such or such particular evils, or to grant them this or that particular gift, or blessing; such intercessions, besides the great charity of them, would have a mighty effect upon your own heart, as disposing you to every other good office, and to the exercise of every other virtue towards such persons, as have so often a place in your prayers.

This would make it pleasant to you to be *courteous, civil, and condescending* to all about you; and make you unable to say, or do a rude, or hard thing to those, for whom you had used yourself to be so kind and compassionate in your prayers.

For there is nothing that makes us love a man so much, as praying for him; and when you can once do this sincerely for any man, you have fitted your soul for the performance of every thing that is kind and civil towards him. This will fill your heart with a generosity and tenderness, that will give you a better and sweeter behaviour, than any thing that is called *fine breeding, and good manners*.

By

By considering yourself as an advocate with God for your neighbours and acquaintance, you would never find it hard to be at peace with them yourself. It would be easy to you to bear with, and forgive those, for whom you particularly implor'd the divine mercy and forgiveness.

Such prayers as these amongst *neighbours* and *acquaintance*, would unite them to one another in the strongest bonds of love and tenderness. It would exalt and ennoble their souls, and teach them to consider one another in a higher state, as members of a *spiritual society*, that are created for the enjoyment of the common blessings of God, and fellow-heirs of the same future glory.

And by being thus desirous, that every one should have their full share of the favours of God, they would not only be content, but glad to see one another happy in the little enjoyments of this transitory life.

These would be the natural effects of such an intercession amongst people of the same *town* or *neighbourhood*, or that were acquainted with one another's *state* and *condition*.

Ouranius is a holy Priest, full of the spirit of the Gospel, watching, labouring, and praying for a poor *country village*. Every soul in it is as dear to him as himself; and he loves them all, as he loves himself; because he *prays* for them all, as often as he prays for himself.

If

If his whole life is one continual exercise of great zeal and labour, hardly ever satisfy'd with any degrees of care and watchfulness, 'tis because he has learn'd the great value of souls, by so often appearing before God, as an *intercessor* for them.

He never thinks he can love, or do enough for his flock; because he never considers them in any other view, than as so many persons, that by receiving the gifts and graces of God, are to become his *hope*, his *joy*, and his *crown of rejoicing*.

He goes about his Parish, and visits every body in it; but visits in the same spirit of piety that he preaches to them; he visits them to encourage their virtues, to assist them with his advice and counsel, to discover their manner of life, and to know the state of their souls, that he may *intercede* with God for them, according to their *particular necessities*.

When *Ouranius* first entred into holy orders, he had a *haughtiness* in his temper, a great *contempt* and *disregard* for all foolish and unreasonable people; but he has *pray'd away* this spirit, and has now the greatest tenderness for the most obstinate sinners; because he is always hoping, that God will sooner or later hear those *prayers* that he makes for their repentance.

The *rudeness*, *ill-nature*, or *perverse* behaviour of any of his flock, used at first to betray him into impatience; but it now raises no other passion in him, than a desire of be-

ing upon his knees in prayer to God for them. Thus have his *prayers* for others, *alter'd* and *amended* the state of his own heart.

It would strangely delight you to see with what *spirit* he converses, with what *tendernefs* he reprovcs, with what *affection* he exhorts, and with what *vigor* he preaches; and 'tis all owing to this, because he reprovcs, exhorts, and preaches to those, for whom he first *prays* to God.

This devotion softens his heart, enlightens his mind, sweetens his temper, and makes every thing that comes from him, instructive, amiable, and affecting.

At his first coming to his little *Village*, it was as disagreeable to him as a *prison*, and every day seem'd too tedious to be endured in so retir'd a place. He thought his Parish was too full of *poor* and *mean* people, that were none of them fit for the conversation of a *Gentleman*.

This put him upon a close application to his studies. He kept much at home, writ *notes* upon *Homer* and *Plautus*, and sometimes thought it hard to be called to pray by any poor body, when he was just in the midst of one of *Homer's battels*.

This was his *polite*, or I may rather say, *poor, ignorant* turn of mind, before devotion had got the government of his heart.

But now his days are so far from being tedious, or his Parish too great a retirement, that he now only wants more time to do that
variety

variety of good which his soul thirsts after. The solitude of his little Parish is become matter of great comfort to him, because he hopes that God has plac'd him and his flock there, to make it their way to heaven.

He can now not only converse with, but gladly attend and *wait* upon the poorest kind of people. He is now daily watching over the *weak* and *infirm*, humbling himself to perverse, rude, ignorant people, where-ever he can find them; and is so far from desiring to be considered as a *Gentleman*, that he desires to be used as the *servant* of all; and in the spirit of his Lord and Master *girds himself*, and is glad to *kneel down* and *wash* any of their *feet*.

He now thinks the poorest creature in his Parish good enough, and great enough, to deserve the humblest attendances, the kindest friendships, the tenderest offices, he can possibly shew them.

He is so far now from wanting agreeable company, that he thinks there is no better conversation in the world, than to be talking with *poor* and *mean* people about the kingdom of heaven.

All these noble thoughts and divine sentiments are the effects of his great devotion; he presents every one so often before God in his prayers, that he never thinks he can *esteem*, *reverence*, or *serve* those enough, for whom he implores so many mercies from God.

Ouranius is mightily affected with this passage of holy Scripture, *The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*
 Jam. v. 16.

This makes him practise all the arts of holy living, and aspire after every instance of piety and righteousness, that his prayers for his flock may have their full force, and avail much with God.

For this reason he has sold a small estate that he had, and has erected a charitable retirement for antient, poor people to live in prayer and piety, that his prayers being assisted by such good works, may *pierce the clouds*, and bring down blessings upon those souls committed to his care.

Ouranius reads how God himself said unto *Abimelech* concerning *Abraham*, *He is a Prophet; he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.*
 Gen. xx. 7.

And again, how he said of *Job*, *And my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept.*
 Job xlii. 8.

From these passages *Ouranius* justly concludes, that the prayers of men eminent for holiness of life, have an extraordinary power with God; that he grants to other people such pardons, reliefs and blessings, through their prayers, as would not be granted to men of less piety and perfection. This makes *Ouranius* exceeding studious of christian perfection, searching after every grace and holy temper, purifying his heart all manner of ways, fearful

ful of every error and defect in his life, lest his prayers for his flock should be less availing with God, through his own defects in holiness,

This makes him careful of every *temper* of his heart, give *alms* of all that he hath, *watch*, and *fast*, and *mortify*, and live according to the strictest rules of *temperance*, *meekness*, and *humility*, that he may be in some degree like an *Abraham*, or a *Job* in his Parish, and make such prayers for them, as God will hear and accept.

These are the happy effects, which a *devout intercession* hath produc'd in the life of *Ouraninus*.

And if other people in their several stations, were to imitate this example, in such a manner as suited their particular state of life, they would certainly find the same happy effects from it.

If *Masters*, for instance, were thus to remember their *servants* in their prayers, beseeching God to bless them, and suiting their petitions to the particular wants and necessities of their servants; letting no day pass, without a *full performance* of this part of Devotion, the benefit would be as great to themselves, as to their servants.

No way so likely as this, to inspire them with a true sense of that power which they have in their hands, to make them delight in doing good, and becoming exemplary in all the parts of a wise and good master.

The presenting their servants so often before God, as equally related to God, and entitled to the same expectations of Heaven, as themselves, would naturally incline them to treat them, not only with such *humanity* as became *fellow-creatures*, but with such *tenderness, care, and generosity*, as became *fellow-heirs* of the same glory. This Devotion would make masters inclin'd to every thing that was good towards their servants; be watchful of their behaviour, and as ready to require of them an exact observance of the duties of Christianity, as of the duties of their service.

This would teach them to consider their servants as God's servants, to desire their perfection, to do nothing before them that might corrupt their minds, to impose no business upon them that should lessen their sense of Religion, or hinder them from their full share of Devotion, both publick and private. This praying for them, would make them as glad to see their servants eminent in piety as themselves, and contrive that they should have all the opportunities and encouragements, both to know and perform all the duties of the christian life.

How natural would it be for such a Master, to perform every part of Family-Devotion; to have constant prayers, to excuse no ones absence from them; to have the Scriptures, and books of piety often read amongst his servants; to take all opportunities of instructing

structing them, of raising their minds to God, and teaching them to do all their business, as a service to God, and upon the hopes and expectations of another life?

How natural would it be for such a one to pity their weakness and ignorance, to bear with the dulness of their understandings, or the perverseness of their tempers; to reprove them with tenderness, exhort them with affection, as hoping that God would hear his prayers for them?

How impossible would it be for a Master, that thus interceded with God for his servants, to use any unkind threatenings towards them, to damn and curse them as *dogs* and scoundrels, and treat them only as the dregs of the creation.

This Devotion would give them another spirit, and make them consider how to make proper returns of care, kindness, and protection to those, who had spent their strength and time in service and attendance upon them.

Now if *Gentlemen* think it too low an employment for their state and dignity, to exercise such a Devotion as this for their *servants*, let them consider how far they are from the spirit of Christ, who made himself not only an intercessor, but a sacrifice for the whole race of sinful mankind.

Let them consider how miserable their greatness would be, if the Son of God should think it as much below him to pray for them,

as they do to pray for their fellow-creatures.

Let them consider how far they are from that spirit, which prays for its most unjust enemies, if they have not kindness enough to pray for those, by whose labours and service they live in ease themselves.

Again, if *Parents* should thus make themselves *advocates* and *intercessors* with God for their children, constantly applying to Heaven in behalf of them, nothing would be more likely, not only to bless their children, but also to form and dispose their own minds to the performance of every thing that was excellent and praise-worthy.

I don't suppose, but that the generality of *Parents* remember their children in their prayers, and call upon God to bless them. But the thing here intended, is not a general remembrance of them, but a *regular method* of recommending all their *particular needs* and *necessities* unto God; and of praying for every such particular *grace* and *virtue* for them, as their *state* and *condition* of life shall seem to require,

The state of *Parents* is a holy state, in some degree like that of the *Priesthood*, and calls upon them to bless their children with their prayers and sacrifices to God. Thus it was that holy *Job* watch'd over, and blessed his children, he *sanctify'd* them, he

Job i. 5. *rose up early in the morning, and offer'd*

fer'd burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all.

If Parents therefore, considering themselves in this light, should be daily calling upon God in a *solemn, deliberate* manner, *altering* and *extending* their intercessions, as the *state* and *growth* of their children requir'd, such Devotion would have a mighty influence upon the rest of their lives; it would make them very circumspect in the government of themselves; prudent and careful of every thing they said or did, lest their example should hinder that, which they so constantly desir'd in their prayers.

If a father was daily making particular prayers to God, that he would please to inspire his children with *true piety, great humility, and strict temperance*, what could be more likely to make the father himself become exemplary in these virtues? How naturally would he grow asham'd of wanting such virtues, as he thought necessary for his children? So that his prayers for their piety, would be a certain means of exalting his own to its greatest height.

If a father thus consider'd himself as an intercessor with God for his children, to bless them with his prayers, what more likely means to make him aspire after every degree of holiness, that he might thereby be fitter to obtain blessings from Heaven for them? How would such thoughts make him avoid every thing that was sinful and displeasing to
God,

God, lest when he pray'd for his children, God should reject his prayers?

How tenderly, how religiously would such a father converse with his children, whom he consider'd as his little spiritual flock, whose virtues he was to form by his example, encourage by his authority, nourish by his counsel, and prosper by his prayers to God for them?

How fearful would he be of all greedy and unjust ways of raising their fortune, of bringing them up in pride and indulgence, or of making them too fond of the world, lest he should thereby render them incapable of those graces, which he was so often beseeching God to grant them?

These being the plain, natural, happy effects of this intercession, all parents, I hope, who have the real welfare of their children at heart, who desire to be their true friends and benefactors, and to live amongst them in the spirit of wisdom and piety, will not neglect so great a means, both of raising their own virtue, and doing an eternal good to those, who are so near and dear to them, by the strongest ties of nature.

Lastly, If all people, when they feel the first approaches of *resentment*, *envy*, or *contempt*, towards others; or if in all little disagreements, and misunderstandings whatever, they should, instead of indulging their minds with little low reflections, have recourse at such times to a more particular and extraordinary

dinary intercession with God, for such persons as had rais'd their envy, resentment, or discontent; this would be a certain way to prevent the growth of all uncharitable tempers.

If you was also to form your prayer, or intercession at that time, to the greatest degree of *contrariety* to that temper which you was then in, it would be an excellent means of raising your heart to the greatest state of perfection.

As for instance, when at any time you find in your heart motions of *envy* towards any person, whether on account of his *riches, power, reputation, learning, or advancement*, if you should immediately betake your self at that time to your prayers, and pray to God to bless and prosper him in that *very thing*, which rais'd your envy; if you should express and repeat your petitions in the strongest terms, beseeching God to grant him all the happiness from the enjoyment of it, that can possibly be receiv'd, you would soon find it to be the best antidote in the world, to expel the venom of that poisonous passion.

This would be such a triumph over your self, would so humble and reduce your heart into obedience and order, that the devil would even be afraid of tempting you again in the same manner, when he saw the temptation turn'd into so great a means of amending and reforming the state of your heart.

Again,

Again, If in any little difference or misunderstandings that you happen'd to have at any time with a *relation, a neighbour,* or any one else, you should then pray for them in a more *extraordinary manner,* than you ever did before; beseeching God to give them every grace, and blessing, and happiness you can think of, you would have taken the speediest method that can be, of reconciling all differences, and clearing up all misunderstandings. You would then think nothing too great to be forgiven; stay for no condescensions, need no mediation of a third person, but be glad to testify your love and good-will to him, who had so high a place in your secret prayers.

This would be the mighty power of such Christian devotion; it would remove all peevish passions, soften your heart into the most tender condescensions, and be the best arbitrator of all differences that happened betwixt you and any of your acquaintance.

The greatest resentments amongst friends and neighbours most often arise from poor *punctilio's,* and *little mistakes* in conduct. A certain sign that their friendship is *merely human,* not founded upon religious considerations, or supported by such a course of mutual prayer for one another, as the first Christians used.

For such devotion must necessarily either destroy such tempers, or be itself destroyed by them.

You

You cannot possibly have any ill temper, or shew any unkind behaviour to a man, for whose welfare you are so much concerned, as to be his advocate with God in private.

Hence we may also learn the odious nature and exceeding guilt of all *spight, hatred, contempt, and angry passions*; they are not to be considered as defects in *good nature, and sweetness* of temper, not as failings in *civility* of manners, or *good breeding*, but as such *base tempers* as are entirely inconsistent with the *charity* of intercession.

You think it a small matter to be *peevish* or *ill-natur'd* to such or such a man; but you should consider, whether it be a small matter to do that, which you could not do, if you had but so much charity as to be able to recommend him to God in your prayers.

You think it a small matter to *ridicule* one man, and *despise* another; but you should consider, whether it be a small matter to want that charity towards these people, which Christians are not allowed to want towards their most inveterate enemies.

For be but as charitable to these men, do but *blefs* and *pray* for them, as you are oblig'd to blefs and pray for your *enemies*, and then you will find that you have charity enough, to make it impossible for you to treat them with any degree of scorn or contempt.

For you cannot possibly despise and ridicule that man, whom your *private prayers* recommend to the love and favour of God.

When

When you despise and ridicule a man, it is with no other end, but to make him ridiculous and contemptible in the eyes of other men, and in order to prevent their esteem of him. How therefore can it be possible for you sincerely to beseech God to bless that man with the *honour* of his love and favour, whom you desire men to treat as worthy of their *contempt*?

Could you out of love to a neighbour, desire your *Prince* to honour him with every mark of his esteem and favour, and yet at the same time expose him to the scorn and derision of your own servants?

Yet this is as possible, as to expose that man to the scorn and contempt of your fellow-creatures, whom you recommend to the favour of God in your secret prayers.

From these considerations we may plainly discover the reasonableness and justice of this doctrine of the Gospel, *Whosoever* Matth. v. 22. *shall say unto his brother, Racha, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

We are not, I suppose, to believe that every hasty word, or unreasonable expression, that slips from us by *chance*, or *surprize*, and is contrary to our intention and *tempers*, is the great sin here signified.

But he that says, *Racha*, or *thou fool*, must chiefly mean him that allows himself in *deliberate*, *design'd* acts of *scorn* and *contempt* towards
wards

wards his brother, and in that temper speaks to him, and of him, in reproachful language.

Now since it appears, that these tempers are at the bottom the most *rank uncharitableness*, since no one can be guilty of them, but because he has not charity enough to pray to God for his brother; it cannot be thought hard, or rigorous justice, that such tempers should endanger the salvation of Christians. For who would think it hard, that a Christian cannot obtain the favour of God for himself, unless he reverence and esteem his brother Christian, as one that bears the image of God, as one for whom Christ dy'd, as a member of Christ's body, as a member of that holy society on earth, which is in union with that triumphant Church in heaven?

Yet all these considerations must be forgot, all these glorious privileges disregarded, before a man can treat him that has them, as an object of scorn and contempt.

So that to scorn, or despise a brother, or, as our blessed Lord says, to call him *Racha*, or *fool*, must be look'd upon, as amongst the most odious, unjust, and guilty tempers, that can be supported in the heart of a Christian, and justly excluding him from all his hopes in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

For to despise one for whom Christ dy'd, is to be as contrary to Christ, as he that despises any thing that Christ has said, or done.

If a Christian that had liv'd with the holy *Virgin Mary*, should, after the death of our
Lord,

Lord, have taken any occasion to treat her with contempt, you would certainly say, that he had lost his piety towards our blessed Lord. For a true reverence for Christ must have forced him to treat her with respect, who was so nearly related to him.

I dare appeal to any man's mind, whether it does not tell him, that this relation of the *Virgin Mary* to our blessed Lord, must have obliged all those that lived and convers'd with her, to treat her with great respect and esteem. Might not a man have justly dreaded the vengeance of God upon him, for any scorn or contempt that he had shewn to her?

Now if this be plain and obvious reasoning, if a contempt offer'd to the *Virgin Mary* must have been interpreted a contempt of Christ, because of her near relation to him, then let the same reasoning shew you the great impiety of despising any brother.

You cannot despise a brother, without despising him that stands in a *high relation* to God, to his Son Jesus Christ, and to the holy Trinity.

You would certainly think it a mighty impiety to treat a *writing* with great contempt, that had been written by the *finger* of God; and can you think it a less impiety to contemn and vilify a brother, who is not only the *workmanship*, but the *image* of God?

You would justly think it great prophane-ness to contemn and trample upon an *Altar*, because it was appropriated to holy uses, and
had

had had the body of Christ so often placed upon it; and can you suppose it to be less profaneness to scorn and trample upon a brother, who so belongs to God, that his very body is to be considered as the *temple of the Holy Ghost*? 1 Cor. vi. 15.

Had you despis'd and ill-treated the Virgin *Mary*, you had been chargeable with the impiety of despising her, of whom Christ was born. And if you scorn and despise a brother, you are chargeable with the impiety of despising him, for whom Christ laid down his life.

And now if this scornful temper is founded upon a disregard of all these relations, which every Christian bears to God, and Christ, and the Holy Trinity, can you wonder, or think it hard, that a Christian who thus allows himself to despise a brother, should be in danger of hell fire?

Secondly, It must here be observed, that tho' in these words, *whosoever shall say, Thou fool, &c.* the great sin there condemned is an *allowed temper* of despising a brother; yet we are also to believe, that all *hasty expressions*, and words of *contempt*, tho' spoken by *surprize* or *accident*, are by this text condemned as great sins, and notorious breaches of Christian charity.

They proceed from great want of Christian love and meekness, and call for great repentance. They are only little sins, when compar'd with *habits* and *settled tempers* of treat-

ing a brother despightfully, and fall as directly under the condemnation of this text, as the grossest habits of uncharitableness.

And the reason why we are always to apprehend great guilt, and call ourselves to a strict repentance for these hasty expressions of anger and contempt, is this; because they seldom are what they seem to be, that is, *mere starts* of temper, that were occasion'd *purely* by *surprize* or *accident*, but are much more our own proper acts, than we generally imagine.

A man says a great many bitter things; he presently forgives himself, because he supposes it was only the *suddenness* of the occasion, or something *accidental*, that carry'd him so far beyond himself.

But he should consider, that perhaps the *accident*, or *surprize*, was not the occasion of his angry expressions, but might only be the occasion of his angry temper shewing itself.

Now as this is, generally speaking, the case, as all *haughty*, *angry* language generally proceeds from some *secret habits* of pride in the heart; so people that are subject to it, tho' only now and then as accidents happen, have great reason to repent of more than their present behaviour, to charge themselves with greater guilt than accidental passion, and to bring themselves to such penance and mortification, as is proper to destroy *habits* of a haughty spirit.

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And this may be the reason, why the text looks no farther than the outward language; why it only says, *Whosoever shall say, Thou fool*; because few can proceed so far, as to the accidental use of *haughty, disdainful* language, but they whose hearts are more or less possess'd with *habits and settled tempers* of pride and haughtiness.

But to return, *Intercession* is not only the best arbitrator of all differences, the best promoter of true friendship, the best cure and preservative against all unkind tempers, all angry and haughty passions, but is also of great use to discover to us the true state of our own hearts.

There are many tempers which we think *lawful and innocent*, which we never suspect of any harm; which, if they were to be try'd by this devotion, would soon shew us how we have deceiv'd ourselves.

Susurrus is a pious, temperate, good man, remarkable for abundance of excellent qualities. No one more constant at the service of the Church, or whose heart is more affected with it. His charity is so great, that he almost starves himself, to be able to give greater alms to the poor.

Yet *Susurrus* had a prodigious failing along with these great virtues.

He had a mighty inclination to hear and discover all the defects and infirmities of all about him. You was welcome to tell him any thing of any body, provided that you did

not do it in the *stile* of an enemy. He never dislik'd an *evil-speaker*, but when his language was *rough* and *passionate*. If you would but whisper any thing gently, though it was ever so bad in it self, *Susurrus* was ready to receive it.

When he visits, you generally hear him relating, how sorry he is for the defects and failings of such a neighbour. He is always letting you know how tender he is of the reputation of his neighbour; how loth to say that which he is forc'd to say, and how gladly he would conceal it, if it could be conceal'd.

Susurrus had such a tender, compassionate manner of relating things the most prejudicial to his neighbour, that he even seem'd, both to himself and others, to be exercising a christian charity, at the same time that he was indulging a whispering, evil-speaking temper.

Susurrus once whisper'd to a particular friend in great secrecy, something too bad to be spoke of publickly. He ended with saying, how glad he was, that it had not yet took wind, and that he had some hopes it might not be true, though the suspicions were very strong. His friend made him this reply:

You say, *Susurrus*, that you are glad it has not yet taken wind; and that you have some hopes it may not prove true. Go home therefore to your *closet*, and pray to God for this man, in such a manner, and with such earnest-

earnestness, as you would pray for your self on the like occasion.

Beseech God to interpose in his favour, to save him from false accusers, and bring all those to shame, who by *uncharitable whispers*, and *secret stories*, wound him, like those that stab in the dark. And when you have made this prayer, then you may, if you please, go tell the same secret to some other friend, that you have told to me.

Sufurrus was exceedingly affected with this rebuke, and felt the force of it upon his conscience in as lively a manner, as if he had seen the *books open'd* at the day of Judgment.

All other arguments might have been resisted; but it was impossible for *Sufurrus* either to reject, or to follow this advice, without being equally self-condemn'd in the highest degree.

From that time to this, he has constantly us'd himself to this method of intercession; and his heart is so entirely chang'd by it, that he can now no more privately whisper any thing to the prejudice of another, than he can openly pray to God to do people hurt.

Whisperings and evil-speakings now hurt his ears, like oaths and curses; and he has appointed one day in the week, to be a day of penance as long as he lives, to humble himself before God, in the sorrowful confession of his former guilt.

It may well be wonder'd, how a man of so much piety as *Susurrus*, could be so long deceiv'd in himself, as to live in such a state of *scandal* and *evil-speaking*, without suspecting himself to be guilty of it. But it was the *tenderness* and seeming *compassion* with which he heard and related every thing, that deceiv'd both himself and others.

This was a falseness of heart, which was only to be fully discover'd, by the true *charity* of *intercession*.

And if people of virtue, who think as little harm of themselves, as *Susurrus* did, were often to try their spirit by such an *intercession*, they would often find themselves to be such, as they least of all suspected.

I have laid before you, the many and great advantages of *intercession*. You have seen what a divine friendship it must needs beget amongst Christians, how dear it would render all relations, and neighbours to one another; how it tends to make *Clergymen*, *Misters*, and *Parents*, exemplary and perfect in all the duties of their station; how certainly it destroys all envy, spight, and ill-natur'd passions; how speedily it reconciles all differences, and with what a piercing light it discovers to a man the true state of his heart.

These considerations will, I hope, persuade you to make such intercession as is proper for your state, the *constant*, *chief* matter of your devotion at this hour of prayer.

C H A P. XXII.

Recommending Devotion at three o'Clock, call'd in Scripture the ninth hour of the day. The subject of prayer at this hour, is resignation to the divine pleasure. The nature and duty of conformity to the will of God in all our actions and designs.

I Have recommended certain subjects to be made the fix'd and chief matter of your Devotions, at all the hours of prayer that have been already consider'd.

As *thanksgiving*, and *oblation* of your self to God, at your first prayers in the morning. At *nine*, the great virtue of Christian *humility* is to be the chief part of your petitions; at *twelve*, you are call'd upon to pray for all the graces of *universal love*, and to raise it in your heart by such general and particular *intercessions*, as your own state, and relation to other people, seem more particularly to require of you.

At this *hour* of the afternoon, you are desir'd to consider the necessity of *resignation* and *conformity* to the will of God, and to make this great virtue the principal matter of your prayers.

There is nothing *wise*, or *holy*, or *just*, but the *great will* of God. This is as strictly true

in the most rigid sense, as to say, that nothing is infinite and eternal but God.

No beings therefore, whether in Heaven, or on earth, can be wise, or holy, or just, but so far as they conform to *this will* of God. It is conformity to this will, that gives virtue and perfection to the highest services of angels in Heaven; and it is conformity to the same will, that makes the ordinary actions of men on earth, become an acceptable service unto God.

The whole nature of virtue consists in conforming, and the whole nature of vice in declining from the will of God. All God's creatures are created to fulfil his will; the *Sun* and *Moon* obey his will, by the necessity of their nature; *Angels* conform to his will, by the perfection of their nature: If therefore you would shew your self not to be a *rebel* and *apostate* from the order of the creation, you must act like beings both above and below you; it must be the great desire of your soul, that God's will may be done by you on earth, as it is done in heaven. It must be the settled purpose and intention of your heart, to *will* nothing, *design* nothing, *do* nothing, but so far as you have reason to believe, that it is the will of God, that you should so desire, design and do.

'Tis as just and necessary to live in this state of heart, to think thus of God and your self, as to think that you have any dependence upon him. And it is as great a rebel-

lion against God, to think that your will may ever differ from his, as to think that you have not receiv'd the power of *willing* from him.

You are therefore to consider your self as a being, that has no other business in the world, but to be that which God requires you to be; to have no tempers, no rules of your own, to seek no self-designs, or self-ends, but to fill some *place*, and act some *part* in strict conformity, and thankful resignation to the divine pleasure.

To think that you are your own, or at your own disposal, is as absurd as to think that you created, and can preserve your self. It is as plain and necessary a first principle, to believe you are thus God's, that you thus belong to him, and are to act and suffer all in a thankful resignation to his pleasure, as to believe, that in him you *live, and move, and have your being.*

Resignation to the divine will, signifies a cheerful approbation, and thankful acceptance of every thing that comes from God. It is not enough patiently to submit, but we must thankfully receive, and fully approve of every thing, that by the order of God's providence happens to us.

For there is no reason why we should be patient, but what is as good and strong a reason why we should be thankful. If we were under the hands of a wise and good *Physician*, that could not mistake, or do any thing to us, but what certainly tended to our benefit;
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it would not be enough to be patient, and abstain from murmuring against such a Physician; but it would be as great a breach of duty and gratitude to him, not to be pleas'd and thankful for what he did, as it would be to murmur at him.

Now this is our true state with relation to God; we can't be said so much as to *believe* in him, unless we believe him to be of *infinite wisdom*. Every argument therefore for patience under his disposal of us, is as strong an argument for approbation and thankfulness for every thing that he does to us. And there needs no more to dispose us to this gratitude towards God, than a full belief in him, that he is this being of infinite wisdom, love and goodness.

Do but assent to this truth, in the same manner as you assent to things of which you have no doubt, and then you will cheerfully approve of every thing, that God has already approv'd for you.

For as you cannot possibly be pleas'd with the behaviour of any person towards you, but because it is for your good, is wise in its self, and the effect of his love and goodness towards you; so when you are satisfy'd that God does not only do that which is wise, and good, and kind, but that which is the effect of an infinite wisdom and love in the care of you; it will be as necessary, whilst you have this faith, to be thankful and pleas'd with
every

every thing which God chuses for you, as to wish your own happiness.

Whenever therefore you find your self dispos'd to *uneasiness*, or *murmuring* at any thing, that is the effect of God's providence over you, you must look upon your self as *denying* either the wisdom or goodness of God. For every complaint necessarily supposes this. You would never complain of your *neighbour*, but that you suppose you can shew either his *unwise*, *unjust*, or *unkind* behaviour towards you.

Now every murmuring, impatient reflection under the providence of God, is the same accusation of God. A complaint always supposes *ill usage*.

Hence also you may see the great necessity and piety of this thankful state of heart, because the want of it implies an accusation of God's want either of wisdom, or goodness, in his disposal of us. It is not therefore any high degree of perfection, founded in any uncommon *nicety* of thinking, or *refin'd notions*, but a plain principle, founded in this plain belief, that God is a being of infinite wisdom and goodness.

Now this resignation to the divine will, may be consider'd in two respects; *First*, As it signifies a thankful approbation of God's *general* providence over the world: *Secondly*, As it signifies a thankful acceptance of his *particular* providence over us.

First,

First, Every man is by the law of his creation, by the first article of his creed, oblig'd to consent to, and acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of God, in his *general providence* over the whole world. He is to believe that it is the effect of God's great wisdom and goodness, that the world it self was form'd at such a particular time, and in such a manner. That the general order of nature, the whole frame of things, is contriv'd and form'd in the best manner. He is to believe that God's providence over states and kingdoms, times and seasons, is all for the best. That the revolutions of state, and changes of empire, the rise and fall of monarchies, persecutions, wars, famines, and plagues, are all permitted, and conducted by God's providence, to the general good of man in this state of trial.

A good man is to believe all this, with the same fulness of assent, as he believes that God is in every place, though he neither sees, nor can comprehend the manner of his presence.

This is a noble magnificence of thought, a true religious greatness of mind, to be thus affected with God's general providence, admiring and magnifying his wisdom in all things; never murmuring at the course of the world, or the state of things, but looking upon all around, at heaven and earth, as a pleas'd spectator; and adoring that invisible hand, which gives laws to all motions, and over-
rules

rules all events to ends suitable to the highest wisdom and goodness.

It is very common for people to allow themselves great liberty in finding fault with such things, as have only God for their cause.

Every one thinks he may justly say, what a *wretched, abominable climate* he lives in. This man is frequently telling you, what a *dismal, cursed* day it is, and what intolerable *seasons* we have. Another thinks he has very little to thank God for, that it is hardly worth his while to live in a world so full of changes and revolutions. But these are tempers of great impiety, and shew that religion has not yet its seat in the heart of those that have them.

It sounds indeed much better to murmur at the course of the world, or the state of things, than to murmur at providence; to complain of the seasons and weather, than to complain of God; but if these have no other cause but God and his providence, it is a poor distinction to say, that you are only angry at the things, but not at the cause and director of them.

How *sacred* the whole frame of the world is, how all things are to be consider'd as God's, and referr'd to him, is fully taught by our blessed Lord in the case of *oaths*: *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King;*

Matth. v. 37.

King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black; that is, because the whiteness or blackness of thy hair is not thine, but God's.

Here you see all things in the whole order of nature, from the highest heavens to the smallest hair, are always to be considered, not separately as they are in themselves, but as in some relation to God. And if this be good reasoning, thou shalt not swear by the *earth*, a *city*, or thy *hair*, because these things are God's, and in a certain manner belong to him; is it not exactly the same reasoning to say, Thou shalt not murmur at the *seasons* of the earth, the *states* of cities, and the change of *times*, because all these things are in the hands of God, have him for their Author, are directed and governed by him to such ends, as are most suitable to his wise Providence?

If you think you can murmur at the state of things without murmuring at Providence, or complain of seasons without complaining of God; hear what our blessed Lord says farther

Mat. xxiii. 20. upon oaths: *Whoso shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon: and whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by him that dwelleth therein: and he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.*

Now does not this Scripture plainly oblige us to reason after this manner: Whoso murmurs at the course of the world, murmurs at
 God

God that governs the course of the world. Whoſo repines at *ſeaſons* and *weather*, and ſpeaks impatiently of times and events, repines and ſpeaketh impatiently of God, who is the ſole Lord and Governor of *times*, *ſeaſons*, and *events*.

As therefore when we think of God himſelf, we are to have no ſentiments but of praiſe and thankſgiving; ſo when we look at thoſe things which are under the direction of God, and govern'd by his Providence, we are to receive them with the ſame tempers of praiſe and gratitude.

And though we are not to think all things right, and juſt, and lawful, which the Providence of God permits; for then nothing could be unjuſt, becauſe nothing without his permiſſion: yet we muſt adore God in the greateſt publick calamities, the moſt grievous perſecutions, as things that are ſuffer'd by God, like *plagues* and *famines*, for ends ſuitable to his wiſdom and glory in the government of the world.

There is nothing more ſuitable to the piety of a reaſonable creature, or the ſpirit of a Chriſtian, than thus to approve, admire, and glorify God in all the acts of his general Providence: conſidering the whole world as his particular family, and all events as directed by his wiſdom.

Every one ſeems to conſent to this, as an undeniable truth, *That all things muſt be as God pleaſes*; and is not this enough to make
every

every man pleas'd with them himself? And how can a man be a peevish complainer of any thing that is the effect of Providence, but by shewing that his own *self-will* and *self-wisdom* is of more weight with him, than the will and wisdom of God? And what can Religion be said to have done for a man, whose heart is in this state?

For if he cannot thank and praise God, as well in calamities and sufferings, as in prosperity and happiness, he is as far from the piety of a Christian, as he that only loves them that love him, is from the charity of a Christian. For to thank God only for such things as you like, is no more a proper act of piety, than to believe only what you see, is an act of faith.

Resignation and thanksgiving to God are only acts of piety, when they are acts of *faith*, *trust* and *confidence* in the divine Goodness.

The faith of *Abraham* was an act of true piety, because it stopp'd at no difficulties, was not alter'd or lessen'd by any human appearances. It first of all carry'd him, against all shew of happiness, from his own kindred and country, into a strange land, *not knowing whither he went*. It afterwards made him against all appearances of nature, when his *body was dead*, when he was about an hundred years old, depend upon the promise of God, *being fully persuaded, that what God had promis'd, he was able to perform*. It was this same faith, that against so many pleas of nature, so many appear-

appearances of reason, prevail'd upon him to offer up Isaac——accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead. Heb.xi.17,19.

Now this faith is the true pattern of Christian resignation to the divine pleasure; you are to thank and praise God, not only for things agreeable to you, that have the appearance of happiness and comfort; but when you are like *Abraham*, called from all appearances of comfort, to be a *pilgrim* in a strange land, to part with an *only son*; being as fully persuaded of the divine Goodness in all things that happen to you, as *Abraham* was of the divine promise, when there was the least appearance of its being performed.

This is true Christian resignation to God, which requires no more to the support of it, than such a plain assurance of the goodness of God, as *Abraham* had of his veracity. And if you ask yourself, what greater reason *Abraham* had to depend upon the divine Veracity, than you have to depend upon the divine Goodness, you will find that none can be given.

You cannot therefore look upon this as an unnecessary, high pitch of perfection, since the want of it implies the want not of any high notions, but of a plain and ordinary faith in the most certain doctrines both of natural and reveal'd religion.

Thus much concerning resignation to the divine Will, as it signifies a thankful appro-

bation of God's *general providence*: It is now to be consider'd, as it signifies a *thankful acceptance* of God's *particular providence* over us.

Every man is to consider himself as a particular object of God's providence; under the same care and protection of God, as if the world had been made for him alone. It is not by chance that any man is born at such a *time*, of such *parents*, and in such *place* and *condition*. It is as certain, that every *soul* comes into the body at such a time, and in such circumstances, by the express *designment* of God, according to *some purposes* of his will, and for some *particular ends*; this is as certain, as that it is by the express designment of God, that some beings are *Angels*, and others are *men*.

It is as much by the counsel and eternal purpose of God, that you should be born in your particular state, and that *Isaac* should be the son of *Abraham*, as that *Gabriel* should be an *Angel*, and *Isaac* a man.

The Scriptures assure us, that it was by divine appointment, that our blessed Saviour was born at *Bethlehem*, and at such a time. Now altho' it was owing to the dignity of his person, and the great importance of his birth, that thus much of the divine counsel was declared to the world concerning the time and manner of it; yet we are as sure from the same Scriptures, that the *time* and *manner* of every man's coming into the world, is according to some *eternal purposes* and *direction* of
 Divine

Divine Providence, and in *such time, and place, and circumstances*, as are directed and governed by God for *particular ends* of his wisdom and goodness.

This we are as certain of from plain revelation, as we can be of any thing. For if we are told, that not a *sparrow falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father*; can any thing more strongly teach us, that much greater beings, such as human souls, come not into the world without the care and direction of our heavenly Father? If it is said, *the very hairs of your head are all number'd*; is it not to teach us, that nothing, not the *smallest* things imaginable, happen to us by *chance*? But if the smallest things we can conceive, are declar'd to be under the divine direction, need we, or can we be more plainly taught, that the greatest things of life, such as the *manner* of our coming into the world, our *parents*, the *time*, and other *circumstances* of our birth and condition, are all according to the eternal *purposes, direction and appointment* of Divine Providence?

When the disciples put this question to our blessed Lord concerning the blind man, *saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* He that was the eternal Wisdom of God made this answer, *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his pa-* John ix. 2, 3.
rents; but that the works of God
should be made manifest in him. Plainly declaring, that the particular circumstances of every

man's birth, the body that he receives, and the condition and state of life into which he is born, are appointed by a secret Providence, which directs all things to their particular *times* and *seasons*, and *manner* of existence, that the wisdom and works of God may be made manifest in them all.

As therefore it is thus certain, that we are what we are, as to birth, time, and condition of entering into the world; since all that is particular in our state, is the effect of God's particular providence over us, and intended for some particular ends both of his glory and our own happiness, we are by the greatest obligations of gratitude, called upon to conform and resign our will to the will of God in all these respects; thankfully approving and accepting every thing that is particular in our state. Praising and glorifying his name for our birth of such *parents*, and in such *circumstances* of state and condition; being fully assur'd, that it was for some reasons of infinite wisdom and goodness, that we were so born into such particular states of life.

If the man above-mention'd, was born blind, that the *works of God might be manifested in him*, had he not great reason to praise God, for appointing him in such a particular manner, to be the instrument of his Glory? And if one person is born *here*, and another *there*; if one falls amongst *riches*, and another into *poverty*; if one receives his flesh and blood from these *parents*, and another
from

from those, for as particular ends, as the man was born blind; have not all people the greatest reason to bless God, and to be thankful for their *particular state and condition*, because all that is particular in it, is as directly intended for the glory of God, and their own good, as the *particular blindness* of that man, who was so born, that *the works of God might be manifested in him?*

How noble an idea does this give us of the divine Omniscience presiding over the whole world, and governing such a long chain and combination of seeming accidents and chances, to the common and particular advantage of all beings? So that all persons, in such a wonderful variety of causes, accidents and events, should all fall into such particular states, as were foreseen, and fore-ordain'd to their best advantage, and so as to be most serviceable to the wise and glorious ends of God's government of all the world.

Had you been any thing else than what you are, you had, all things consider'd, been less wisely provided for than you are now; you had wanted some circumstances and conditions, that are best fitted to make you happy your self, and serviceable to the glory of God.

Could you see all that which God sees, all that happy chain of causes and motives which are to move and invite you to a right course of life, you would see something to make

you like that state you are in, as fitter for you than any other.

But as you cannot see this, so it is here that your Christian *faith* and *trust* in God, is to exercise it self, and render you as grateful and thankful for the happiness of your state, as if you saw every thing that contributes to it with your own eyes.

But now if this is the case of every man in the world, thus blessed with some particular state that is most convenient for him, how reasonable is it for every man to will that which God has already will'd for him? And by a pious faith and trust in the divine goodness, thankfully adore and magnify that wise providence, which he is sure has made the best choice for him of those things, which he could not chuse for himself.

Every uneasiness at our own state, is founded upon comparing it with that of other people. Which is full as unreasonable, as if a man in a *dropsy* should be angry at those that prescribe different things to him, from those which are prescrib'd to people in *health*. For all the different states of *life* are like the different states of *diseases*, what is a remedy to one man in his state, may be poison to another.

So that to murmur because you are not as some others are, is as if a man in one disease should murmur that he is not treated like him that is in another. Whereas if he was to
have

have his will, he would be kill'd by that, which will prove the cure of another.

It is just thus in the various conditions of life; if you give your self up to uneasiness, or complain at any thing in your state, you may, for ought you know, be so ungrateful to God, as to murmur at that very thing, which is to prove the cause of your salvation.

Had you it in your power to get that which you think it so grievous to want, it might perhaps be that very thing, which of all others, would most expose you to eternal damnation.

So that whether we consider the infinite goodness of God, that cannot chuse amiss for us, or our own great ignorance of what is most advantageous to us, there can be nothing so reasonable and pious, as to have no will but that of God's, and desire nothing for our selves, in our *persons*, our *state*, and *condition*, but that which the good providence of God appoints us.

Farther, as the good providence of God thus introduces us into the world, into such states and conditions of life, as are most convenient for us, so the same unerring wisdom orders all events and changes in the whole course of our lives, in such a manner, as to render them the fittest means to exercise and improve our virtue.

Nothing hurts us, nothing destroys us, but the ill use of that liberty, with which God has entrusted us.

We are as sure that nothing happens to us by chance, as that the world it self was not made by chance; we are as certain that all things happen, and work together for our good, as that God is goodness it self. So that a man has as much reason to *will* every thing that happens to him, because God *wills* it, as to think that is wisest, which is directed by infinite wisdom.

This is not cheating or soothing our selves into any false content, or imaginary happiness; but is a satisfaction grounded upon as great a certainty, as the being and attributes of God.

For if we are right in believing God to act over us with infinite wisdom and goodness, we cannot carry our notions of conformity and resignation to the divine will too high; nor can we ever be deceiv'd, by thinking that to be best for us, which God has brought upon us.

For the providence of God is not more concern'd in the government of *night* and *day*, and the variety of *seasons*, than in the common course of events, that seem most to depend upon the mere wills of men. So that it is as strictly right, to look upon all worldly accidents and changes, all the various turns and alterations in your own life, to be as truly the effects of Divine Providence, as the rising
and

and setting of the Sun, or the alterations of the seasons of the year. As you are therefore always to adore the wisdom of God in the direction of these things; so it is the same reasonable duty, always to magnify God, as an equal Director of every thing that happens to you in the course of your own life.

This holy resignation and conformity of your will to the will of God, being so much the true state of piety, I hope you will think it proper to make this hour of prayer, a constant season of applying to God for so great a gift. That by thus constantly praying for it, your heart may be habitually dispos'd towards it, and always in a state of readiness to look at every thing as God's, and to consider him in every thing; that so every thing that befalls you, may be receiv'd in the spirit of piety, and made a means of exercising some virtue.

There is nothing that so powerfully governs the heart, that so strongly excites us to wise and reasonable actions, as a true sense of God's *presence*. But as we cannot see, or apprehend the essence of God, so nothing will so constantly keep us under a lively sense of the presence of God, as this holy resignation, which attributes every thing to him, and receives every thing as from him.

Could we see a *miracle* from God, how would our thoughts be affected with an holy awe and veneration of his presence! But if we consider every thing as God's doing, either
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by order or permission, we shall then be affected with *common things*, as they would be who saw a *miracle*.

For as there is nothing to affect you in a miracle, but as it is the *action* of God, and bespeaks his *presence*; so when you consider God, as *acting* in all things, and all events, then all things will become venerable to you, like *miracles*, and fill you with the same awful sentiments of the divine presence.

Now you must not reserve the exercise of this pious temper, to any particular times or occasions, or fancy how *resign'd* you will be to God, if such or such trials should happen. For this is amusing your self with the *notion* or *idea* of resignation, instead of the virtue it self.

Don't therefore please your self with thinking, how piously you would act and submit to God in a *plague*, a *famine*, or *persecution*, but be intent upon the perfection of the present day; and be assur'd, that the best way of shewing a *true zeal*, is to make *little things* the occasions of *great piety*.

Begin therefore in the smallest matters, and most ordinary occasions, and accustom your mind to the daily exercise of this pious temper, in the lowest occurrences of life. And when a *contempt*, an *affront*, a little *injury*, *loss*, or *disappointment*, or the smallest events of every day, continually raise your mind to God in proper acts of resignation, then you may justly hope, that you shall be number'd
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amongst those that are resign'd and thankful to God in the greatest trials and afflictions.

C H A P. XXIII.

Of Evening prayer. Of the nature and necessity of examination. How we are to be particular in the confession of all our sins. How we are to fill our minds with a just horror and dread of all sin.

I Am now come to six o'clock in the evening, which according to the Scripture account, is call'd the twelfth, or *last hour* of the day. This is a time so proper for Devotion, that I suppose nothing need be said to recommend it as a season of prayer, to all people that profess any regard to piety.

As the labour and action of every state of life is generally over at this hour, so this is the proper time for every one to call himself to account, and review all his behaviour, from the first action of the day. The necessity of this examination, is founded upon the necessity of repentance. For if it be necessary to repent of all our sins, if the guilt of unrepented sins still continues upon us, then it is necessary, not only that all our sins, but the particular circumstances and aggravations of them,

them,

them, be known and recollected, and brought to repentance.

The Scripture saith, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Which is as much as to say, that then only our sins are forgiven, and we cleans'd from the guilt and unrighteousness of them, when they are thus confess'd, and repented of.

There seems therefore to be the greatest necessity, that all our daily actions be constantly observ'd, and brought to account, lest by a negligence we load our selves with the guilt of unrepented sins.

This examination therefore of ourselves every evening, is not only to be consider'd as a *commendable rule*, and fit for a wise man to observe, but as something that is as necessary as a daily confession and repentance of our sins; because this daily repentance is of very little significancy, and loses all its chief benefit, unless it be a *particular confession* and repentance of the sins of that day. This examination is necessary to repentance in the same manner as *time* is necessary; you cannot repent or express your sorrow, unless you allow some time for it; nor can you repent, but so far as you *know* what it is that you are repenting of. So that when it is said, that it is necessary to examine and call your actions to account; it is only saying, that it is necessary
to

to know *what*, and *how many* things you are to repent of.

You perhaps have hitherto only used your self to confess yourself a sinner in *general*, and ask forgiveness in the *gross*, without any *particular remembrance*, or contrition for the particular sins of that day. And by this practice you are brought to believe, that the same short, general form of confession of sin in general, is a sufficient repentance for every day.

Suppose another person should hold, that a confession of our sins in general *once* at the end of *every week* was sufficient; and that it was as well to confess the sins of *seven days* all together, as to have a particular repentance at the end of every day.

I know you sufficiently see the unreasonableness and impiety of this opinion, and that you think it is easy enough to shew the danger and folly of it.

Yet you cannot bring one argument against such an opinion, but what will be as good an argument against such a *daily repentance*, as does not call the *particular sins* of that day to a strict account.

For as you can bring no *express text* of Scripture against such an opinion, but must take all your arguments from the nature of *repentance*, and the necessity of a *particular repentance* for particular sins, so every argument of that kind, must as fully prove the necessity of being very particular in our repentance of the sins of every day. Since nothing can be justly

faid againſt leaving the ſins of the *whole week* to be repented for in the *grofs*, but what may as juſtly be ſaid againſt a daily repentance, which conſiders the ſins of that day only in the *grofs*.

Would you tell ſuch a man, that a daily confeſſion was neceſſary to keep up an abhorrence of ſin, that the mind would grow harden'd and ſenſeleſs of the guilt of ſin without it? And is not this as good a reaſon for requiring that your daily repentance be *very expreſs* and *particular* for your daily ſins? For if confeſſion is to raiſe an abhorrence of ſin, ſurely that confeſſion which *conſiders* and *lays open* your particular ſins, that brings them to light with all their circumſtances and aggravations, that requires a particular ſorrowful acknowledgment of every ſin, muſt in a much greater degree fill the mind with an abhorrence of ſin, than that which only in *one* and the *ſame form* of words confeſſes you only to be a ſinner in *general*. For as this is nothing but what the *greateſt Saint* may juſtly ſay of himſelf, ſo the daily repeating of only ſuch a confeſſion, has nothing in it to make you truly aſhamed of your own way of life.

Again; muſt you not tell ſuch a man, that by leaving himſelf to ſuch a *weekly, general* confeſſion, he would be in great danger of forgetting a great many of his ſins? But is there any ſenſe or force in this argument, unleſs you ſuppoſe that our ſins are all to be remember'd, and brought to a particular repentance? And

is it not as necessary, that our particular sins be not forgotten, but particularly remember'd in our daily, as in a repentance at any other time?

So that every argument for a daily confession and repentance, is the same argument for the confession and repentance of the *particular sins* of every day.

Because daily confession has no other reason or necessity, but our daily sins; and therefore is nothing of what it should be, but so far as it is a repentance and sorrowful acknowledgment of the sins of the day.

You would, I suppose, think yourself chargeable with great impiety, if you was to go to bed without confessing yourself to be a sinner, and asking pardon of God; you would not think it sufficient that you did so yesterday. And yet if without any regard to the present day, you only repeat the same form of words that you used yesterday, the sins of the present day may justly be looked upon to have had no repentance. For if the sins of the present day require a new confession, it must be such a new confession as is proper to itself. For it is the *state* and *condition* of every day, that is to determine the *state* and *manner* of your repentance in the evening; otherwise the same general form of words is rather an empty formality, that has the appearance of a duty, than such a true performance of it, as is necessary to make it truly useful to you.

Let

Let it be supposed, that on a certain day you have been guilty of these sins; that you have told a *vain lye* upon yourself, ascribing something falsely to yourself through pride; that you have been guilty of *detraction*, and indulg'd yourself in *some degree* of intemperance. Let it be supposed, that on the next day you have lived in a contrary manner; that you have neglected no duty of devotion, and been the rest of the day innocently employ'd in your proper business. Let it be supposed, that on the evening of both these days you only use the same confession in *general*, considering it rather as a duty that is to be perform'd every night, than as a repentance that is to be suited to the *particular state* of the day.

Can it with any reason be said, that each day has had its proper repentance? Is it not as good sense to say, there is no difference in the guilt of these days, as to say that there need be no different repentance at the end of them? Or how can each of them have its proper repentance, but by its having a repentance as large and extensive, and particular, as the guilt of each day?

Again, let it be suppos'd, that in that day, when you had been guilty of the three notorious sins above-mention'd, that in your evening repentance, you had only call'd one of them to mind. Is it not plain, that the other two are unrepented of, and that therefore their guilt still abides upon you? So that
you

you are then in the state of him, who commits himself to the night without the repentance for such a day, as had betray'd him into two such great sins.

Now these are not needless particulars, or such scrupulous niceties; as a man need not trouble himself about; but are such plain truths, as essentially concern the very life of piety. For if repentance is necessary, it is full as necessary that it be rightly performed, and in due manner.

And I have enter'd into all these particulars, only to shew you in the plainest manner, that *examination*, and a careful review of all the actions of the day, is not only to be looked upon as a good rule, but as something as necessary as repentance itself.

If a man is to account for his expences at night, can it be thought a needless exactness in him, to take notice of every particular expence in the day?

And if a man is to repent of his sins at night, can it be thought too great a piece of scrupulosity in him, to know and call to mind what sins he is to repent of?

Farther; tho' it should be granted, that a confession in *general* may be a sufficient repentance for the end of such days, as have only the unavoidable frailties of our nature to lament; yet even this fully proves the absolute necessity of this self-examination: for without this examination, who can know that he has gone thro' any day in this manner?

Again: An evening repentance, which thus brings all the actions of the day to account, is not only necessary to wipe off the guilt of sin, but is also the most certain way to amend and perfect our lives.

For it is only such a repentance as this, that touches the heart, awakens the conscience, and leaves an horror and detestation of sin upon the mind.

For instance: If it should happen, that upon any particular evening, all that you could charge yourself with should be this, *viz.* a *hasty, negligent* performance of your devotions, or too much time spent in an *impertinent conversation*; if the unreasonableness of these things were fully reflected upon, and acknowledged; if you was then to condemn yourself before God for them, and implore his pardon and assisting grace, what could be so likely a means to prevent your falling into the same faults the next day?

Or if you should fall into them again the next day; yet if they were again brought to the same examination and condemnation in the presence of God, their happening again would be such a proof to you of your own *folly* and *weakness*, would cause such a *pain* and *remorse* in your mind, and fill you with such *shame* and *confusion* at yourself, as would in all probability make you exceedingly desirous of greater perfection.

Now in the case of repeated sins, this would be the certain benefit that we should
receive

receive from this examination and confession; the mind would thereby be made humble, full of sorrow and deep compunction, and by degrees forced into amendment.

Whereas a *formal, general* confession, that is only consider'd as an evening duty, that overlooks the particular mistakes of the day, and is the same whether the day be spent ill or well, has little or no effect upon the mind; a man may use such a daily confession, and yet go on sinning and confessing all his life, without any remorse of mind, or true desire of amendment.

For if your own particular sins are left out of your confession, your confessing of sin in *general* has no more effect upon your mind, than if you had only confess'd, that *all men* in general are *sinners*. And there is nothing in any confession to shew that it is yours, but so far as it is a *self-accusation*, not of sin in general, or such as is common to all others, but of such *particular sins*, as are your own *proper shame* and reproach.

No other confession, but such as thus discovers and accuses your own particular guilt, can be an act of true sorrow, or real concern at your own condition. And a confession that is without this sorrow and compunction of heart, has nothing in it either to atone for past sins, or to produce in us any true reformation and amendment of life.

To proceed; in order to make this examination still farther beneficial, every man should

oblige himself to a certain method in it. As every man has something *particular* in his nature, stronger inclinations to *some vices* than others, some infirmities that *stick closer* to him, and are harder to be conquer'd than others; and as it is as easy for every man to know this of himself, as to know whom he likes, or dislikes; so it is highly necessary, that these particularities of our natures and tempers should never escape a severe trial at our evening repentance: I say, a *severe trial*, because nothing but a rigorous severity against these natural tempers, is sufficient to conquer them.

They are the *right eyes*, that are not to be spared; but to be plucked out and cast from us. For as they are the infirmities of nature, so they have the strength of nature, and must be treated with great opposition, or they will soon be too strong for us.

He therefore who knows himself most of all subject to *anger* and *passion*, must be very *exact* and *constant* in his examination of this temper every evening. He must find out every slip that he has made of that kind, whether in thought, or word, or action; he must *shame*, and *reproach*, and *accuse* himself before God, for every thing that he has said or done in obedience to his passion. He must no more allow himself to forget the examination of this temper, than to forget his whole prayers.

Again;

Again; if you find that *vanity* is your prevailing temper, that is always putting you upon the *adornment* of your person, and catching after every thing that *compliments* or *flatters* your abilities, never spare or forget this temper in your evening examination; but confess to God every vanity of thought, or word, or action, that you have been guilty of, and put your self to all the shame and confusion for it that you can.

In this manner should all people act with regard to their *chief frailty*, to which their nature most inclines them. And though it should not immediately do all that they would wish, yet by a constant practice it would certainly in a short time produce its desir'd effect.

Farther; as all states and employments of life have their particular *dangers* and *temptations*, and expose people more to some sins than others, so every man that wishes his own improvement, should make it a *necessary part* of his evening examination, to consider how he has avoided, or fallen into such sins as are most common to his state of life.

For as our business and condition of life has great power over us, so nothing but such watchfulness as this, can secure us from those temptations to which it daily exposes us.

The *poor man*, from his condition of life, is always in danger of *repining* and *uneasiness*; the *rich man* is most expos'd to *sensuality* and *indulgence*; the *tradesman* to *lying* and *unrea-*

sonable gains; the *scholar* to *pride* and *vanity*; so that in every state of life, a man should always, in his examination of himself, have a strict eye upon those faults, to which his state of life most of all exposes him.

Again; as it is reasonable to suppose, that every good man has enter'd into, or at least propos'd to himself *some method* of holy living, and set himself *some such rules* to observe, as are not common to other people, and only known to himself; so it should be a constant part of his night recollection, to examine how, and in what degree, he has observ'd them, and to reproach himself before God, for every neglect of them.

By rules, I here mean, such rules as relate to the well-ordering of our *time*, and the *business* of our common life. Such rules as prescribe a certain order to all that we are to do, our *business*, *devotion*, *mortifications*, *readings*, *retirements*, *conversation*, *meals*, *refreshments*, *sleep*, and the like.

Now as good rules relating to all these things, are certain means of great improvement, and such as all serious Christians must needs propose to themselves, so they will hardly ever be observ'd to any purpose, unless they are made the *constant subject* of our evening examination.

Lastly, You are not to content your self with a *hasty general* review of the day, but you must enter upon it with deliberation; begin

begin with the *first action* of the day, and proceed step by step, through every particular matter that you have been concern'd in, and so let no *time, place, or action* be overlook'd.

An examination thus manag'd, will in a little time make you as different from your self, as a *wise man* is different from an *ideot*. It will give you such a newness of mind, such a spirit of wisdom, and desire of perfection, as you was an entire stranger to before.

Thus much concerning the *evening examination*.

I proceed now to lay before you such considerations, as may fill your mind with a just dread and horror of all sin, and help you to confess your own in the most passionate contrition, and sorrow of heart.

Consider first, how odious all sin is to God, what a mighty baseness it is, and how abominable it renders sinners in the sight of God. That it is sin alone that makes the great difference betwixt an angel, and the devil; and that every sinner is, so far as he sins, a friend of the devil's, and carrying on his work against God. That sin is a greater blemish and defilement of the soul, than any filth or disease is a defilement of the body. And to be content to live in sin, is a much greater baseness, than to desire to wallow in the mire, or love any bodily impurity.

Consider how you must abhor a creature that delighted in nothing but filth and nastiness, that hated every thing that was decent and clean; and let this teach you to apprehend, how odious that soul that delights in nothing but the impurity of sin, must appear unto God.

For all sins, whether of *sensuality*, *pride*, or *falseness*, or any other *irregular* passion, are nothing else but the filth, and impure diseases of the rational soul. And all righteousness is nothing else but the *purity*, the *decency*, the *beauty* and *perfection* of that spirit, which is made in the image of God.

Again; learn what horror you ought to have for the guilt of sin, from the greatness of that *atonement* which has been made for it.

God made the world by the breath of his mouth, by a word speaking; but the redemption of the world has been a work of longer labour.

How easily God can create beings, we learn from the first chapter of *Genesis*; but how difficult it is for infinite mercy to forgive sins, we learn from that *costly atonement*, those *bloody sacrifices*, those *pains* and *penances*, those *sicknesses* and *deaths*, which all must be undergone, before the guilty sinner is fit to appear in the presence of God.

Ponder these great truths: That the Son of God was forc'd to become man, to be partaker of all our infirmities; to undergo a poor,
pain-

painful, miserable, and contemptible life, to be persecuted, hated, and at last nail'd to a Cross, that by such sufferings he might render God propitious to that nature in which he suffer'd.

That all the bloody sacrifices and attonements of the *Jewish Law*, were to represent the necessity of this *great sacrifice*, and the *great displeasure* God bore to sinners.

That the world is still under the *curse* of sin, and *certain marks* of God's displeasure at it; such as *famines, plagues, tempests, sickness, diseases* and *death*.

Consider that all the sons of *Adam* are to go through a painful, sickly life, denying and mortifying their natural appetites, and crucifying the lusts of the flesh, in order to have a share in the attonement of our Saviour's death.

That all their penances and self-denials, all their tears and repentance, are only made available by that great Intercession, which is still making for them at the right hand of God.

Consider these great truths; that this *mysterious redemption*, all these *sacrifices* and *sufferings*, both of God and man, are only to *remove* the guilt of sin; and then let this teach you with what tears and contrition, you ought to purge your self from it.

After this general consideration of the guilt of sin, which has done so much mischief to your nature, and expos'd it to so great punishment,

nishment, and made it so odious to God, that nothing less than so great an attonement of the Son of God, and so great repentance of our own, can restore us to the divine favour :

Consider next your own *particular share* in the guilt of sin. And if you would know with what zeal you ought to repent your self, consider how you would exhort another sinner to repentance; and what repentance and amendment you would expect from him, whom you judg'd to be the *greatest sinner* in the world.

Now this case every man may justly reckon to be his own. And you may fairly look upon your self to be the greatest sinner that you *know* in the world.

For though you may know abundance of people to be guilty of some gross sins, with which you cannot charge your self, yet you may justly condemn your self, as the greatest sinner that you *know*. And that for these following reasons :

First, Because you *know more* of the folly of your own heart, than you do of other peoples; and can charge your self with *various sins*, that you only know of your self, and cannot be *sure* that other sinners are guilty of them. So that as you know more of the *folly*, the *baseness*, the *pride*, the *deceitfulness* and *negligence* of your own heart, than you do of any ones else, so you have just reason

to

to consider your self as the greatest sinner that you know: Because you know more of the *greatness* of your own sins, than you do of other peoples.

Secondly, The greatness of our guilt arises chiefly from the greatness of God's goodness towards us, from the particular *graces* and *blessings*, the *favours*, the *lights* and *instructions* that we have receiv'd from him.

Now as these graces and blessings, and the multitude of God's favours towards us, are the great aggravations of our sins against God, so they are *only known* to our selves. And therefore every sinner *knows more* of the *aggravations* of his own guilt, than he does of other peoples; and consequently may justly look upon himself to be the greatest sinner that he knows.

How good God has been to other sinners, what *light* and *instruction* he has vouchsaf'd to them; what blessings and *graces* they have receiv'd from him; how often he has touch'd their hearts with holy inspirations, you cannot tell. But all this you know of your self, therefore you know greater aggravations of your own guilt, and are able to charge your self with greater ingratitude than you can charge upon other people.

And this is the reason, why the *greatest saints* have in all ages condemn'd themselves as the greatest sinners, because they knew
some

some aggravations of their own sins, which they could not know of other peoples.

The right way therefore to fill your heart with true contrition, and a deep sense of your own sins, is this: You are not to consider, or compare the *outward form*, or *course* of your life, with that of other peoples, and then think your self to be less sinful than they, because the outward course of your life is less sinful than theirs.

But in order to know your own guilt, you must consider your own particular circumstances, your *health*, your *sickness*, your *youth*, or *age*, your *particular* calling, the happiness of your *education*, the degrees of *light* and *instruction* that you have receiv'd, the *good men* that you have convers'd with, the *admonitions* that you have had, the *good books* that you have read, the numberless multitude of divine *blessings, graces* and *favours* that you have receiv'd, the *good motions* of grace that you have resisted, the *resolutions* of amendment that you have often broken, and the *checks* of conscience that you have disregarded.

For it is from these circumstances, that every one is to state the *measure* and *greatness* of his own guilt. And as you know only these circumstances of your own sins, so you must necessarily know how to charge your self with higher degrees of guilt, than you can charge upon other people.

God

God Almighty knows greater sinners, it may be, than you are; because he sees and knows the circumstances of all mens sins: But your own heart, if it is faithful to you, can discover no guilt so great as your own; because it can only see in you those circumstances, on which great part of the guilt of sin is founded.

You may see sins in other people, that you cannot charge upon yourself; but then you know a number of circumstances of your own guilt, that you cannot lay to their charge.

And perhaps that person that appears at such a distance from your virtue, and so odious in your eyes, would have been much better than you are, had he been altogether in your circumstances, and received all the same favours and graces from God that you have.

This is a very *humbling reflection*, and very proper for those people to make, who measure their virtue, by comparing the outward course of their lives with that of other peoples.

For look at whom you will, however different from you in his way of life, yet you can never know that he has resisted *so much* divine grace as you have; or that in all your circumstances, he would not have been *much truer* to his duty than you are.

Now this is the reason why I desir'd you to consider, how you would exhort that man to confess and bewail his sins, whom you look'd upon to be one of the *greatest sinners*.

Because

Because if you will deal justly, you must fix the charge at *home*, and look no farther than *yourself*. For God has given no one any power of knowing the *true greatness* of any sins, but his own: and therefore the greatest sinner that every one *knows*, is himself.

You may easily see how such a one in the outward course of his life breaks the laws of God; but then you can never say, that had you been exactly in all his circumstances, that you should not have broken them more than he has done.

A serious and frequent reflection upon these things, will mightily tend to humble us in our own eyes, make us very apprehensive of the greatness of our own guilt, and very tender in censuring and condemning other people.

For who would dare to be severe against other people, when for ought he can tell, the severity of God may be more due to him, than to them? Who would exclaim against the guilt of others, when he considers that he knows more of the greatness of his own guilt, than he does of theirs?

How often you have resisted God's holy Spirit; how many motives to goodness you have disregarded; how many particular blessings you have sinn'd against; how many good resolutions you have broken; how many checks and admonitions of conscience you have stifled, you very well know: But how often this has been the case of other sinners, you know not.

And

And therefore the greatest sinner that you know, must be yourself.

Whenever therefore you are *angry* at sin or sinners, whenever you *read* or *think* of God's indignation and wrath at wicked men, let this teach you to be the most severe in your censure, and most humble and contrite in the acknowledgment and confession of your own sins, because you know of no sinner equal to yourself.

Lastly, to conclude this chapter: Having thus examin'd and confess'd your sins at this hour of the evening, you must afterwards look upon yourself, as still oblig'd to betake yourself to prayer again just before you go to *bed*.

The subject that is most proper for your prayers at that time, is *death*. Let your prayers therefore then be wholly upon it, reckoning up all the *dangers*, *uncertainties*, and *terrors* of death; let them contain every thing that can affect and awaken your mind into just apprehensions of it. Let your petitions be all for right sentiments of the *approach* and *importance* of death; and beg of God, that your mind may be possess'd with such a sense of its *nearness*, that you may have it always in your thoughts, do every thing as in sight of it, and make every day, a day for preparation for it.

Represent to your imagination, that your *bed* is your *grave*; that all things are ready for
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your interment; that you are to have no more to do with this world; and that it will be owing to God's great mercy, if you ever see the light of the Sun again, or have another day to add to your works of piety.

And then commit yourself to sleep, as into the hands of God; as one that is to have no more opportunities of doing good; but is to awake amongst spirits that are separate from the body, and waiting for the judgment of the last great day.

Such a solemn resignation of yourself into the hands of God every evening, and parting with all the world, as if you was never to see it any more, and all this in the silence and darkness of the night, is a practice that will soon have excellent effects upon your spirit.

For this time of the night is exceeding proper for such prayers and meditations; and the likeness which *sleep* and *darkness* have to *death*, will contribute very much to make your thoughts about it the more deep and affecting. So that I hope you will not let a time, so proper for such prayers, be ever pass'd over without them.

C H A P. XXIV.

The Conclusion. Of the Excellency and Greatness of a devout Spirit.

I HAVE now finish'd what I intended in this Treatise. I have explain'd the nature of devotion, both as it signifies a life devoted to God, and as it signifies a regular method of daily prayer. I have now only to add a word or two in recommendation of a life governed by this spirit of devotion.

For though it is as reasonable to suppose it the desire of all Christians to arrive at Christian Perfection, as to suppose, that all sick men desire to be restor'd to perfect health; yet experience shews us, that nothing wants more to be press'd, repeated, and forc'd upon our minds, than the plainest rules of Christianity.

Voluntary poverty, virginity, and devout retirement, have been here recommended, as things not necessary, yet highly beneficial to those that would make the way to perfection the most easy and certain. But Christian perfection itself is ty'd to no particular form of life; but is to be attained, tho' not with the same ease, in every state of life.

This has been fully asserted in another place; where it has been shewn, that Christian perfection *calls no one* (necessarily) *to a Cloyster, but to the full performance of those duties, which are necessary for all Christians, and common to all states of life.*

Christ. Perfect.
p. 2.

So that the whole of the matter is plainly this: *Virginity, voluntary poverty, and such other restraints of lawful things, are not necessary to Christian perfection; but are much to be commended in those, who chuse them as helps and means of a more safe and speedy arrival at it.*

It is only in this manner, and in this sense, that I would recommend any particularity of life; not as if perfection consisted in it, but because of its great tendency to produce and support the *true spirit* of Christian perfection.

But the thing which is here press'd upon all, is, a life of *great and strict* devotion; which, I think, has been sufficiently shewn to be equally the duty and happiness of all orders of men. Neither is there any thing in any particular state of life, that can be justly pleaded as a reason for any abatements of a devout spirit.

But because in this *polite* age of ours, we have so *liv'd away* the spirit of devotion, that many seem afraid even to be suspected of it, imagining *great devotion* to be *great bigotry*; that it is founded in *ignorance and poorness* of spirit, and that *little, weak, and dejected* minds, are generally the greatest proficient in it:

It shall here be fully shewn, that *great* devotion is the *noblest* temper of the *greatest* and *noblest* souls; and that they who think it receives any advantage from *ignorance and poorness* of spirit, are themselves not a little, but entirely ignorant of the nature of devotion,
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the nature of God, and the nature of themselves.

People of *fine parts* and *learning*, or of great knowledge in *worldly matters*, may perhaps think it hard to have their *want* of devotion charged upon their *ignorance*. But if they will be content to be try'd by Reason and Scripture, it may soon be made appear, that a *want* of devotion, where-ever it is, either amongst the learned or unlearned, is founded in *gross ignorance*, and the *greatest blindness* and *insensibility* that can happen to a rational creature.

And that devotion is so far from being the effect of a *little* and *dejected* mind, that it must and will be always *highest* in the most *perfect* natures.

And *first*, Who reckons it a sign of a *poor*, *little* mind, for a man to be full of *reverence* and *duty* to his parents, to have the truest *love* and *honour* for his *friend*, or to excel in the *highest instances* of gratitude to his *benefactor*?

Are not these tempers in the *highest* degree in the most exalted and perfect minds?

And yet what is *high devotion*, but the highest exercise of these tempers, of *duty*, *reverence*, *love*, *honour*, and gratitude to the amiable, glorious *parent*, *friend*, and *benefactor* of all mankind?

Is it a true greatness of mind, to reverence the authority of your parents, to fear the displeasure of your friend, to dread the reproaches of your benefactor? and must not this *fear*,

and *dread*, and *reverence*, be much more just, and reasonable, and honourable, when they are in the *highest degree* towards God?

Now as the higher these tempers are, the more are they esteem'd amongst men, and are allow'd to be so much the *greater proofs* of a true greatness of mind; so the higher and greater these same tempers are towards God, so much the more do they prove the nobility, excellence, and greatness of the mind.

So that so long as *duty* to parents, *love* to friends, and *gratitude* to benefactors, are thought great and honourable tempers; devotion, which is nothing else but duty, love, and gratitude to God, must have the highest place amongst our highest virtues.

If a *Prince* out of his *mere goodness* should send you a pardon by one of his *slaves*, would you think it a part of your duty to receive the *slave* with marks of *love*, *esteem*, and *gratitude* for his great kindness, in bringing you so great a gift; and at the same time think it a *mean-ness* and *poorness* of spirit, to shew *love*, *esteem* and *gratitude* to the Prince, who of his own goodness freely sent you the pardon?

And yet this would be as reasonable, as to suppose, that love, esteem, honour, and gratitude, are *noble tempers*, and instances of a *great soul*, when they are paid to our fellow-creatures; but the effects of a *poor*, *ignorant*, *dejected* mind, when they are paid to God.

Farther; that part of devotion which expresses itself in *sorrowful* confessions, and *peni-*

tential tears of a broken and a contrite heart, is very far from being any sign of a *little* and *ignorant* mind.

For who does not acknowledge it an instance of an *ingenious*, *generous*, and *brave* mind, to acknowledge a fault, and ask pardon for any offence? And are not the *finest* and *most improv'd* minds, the most remarkable for this excellent temper?

Is it not also allow'd, that the *ingenuity* and *excellence* of a man's spirit is much shewn, when his sorrow and indignation at himself rises in proportion to the folly of his crime, and the *goodness* and *greatness* of the person he has offended?

Now if things are thus, then the *greater* any man's mind is, the more he *knows* of God and himself, the more will he be dispos'd to prostrate himself before God in all the *humblest* acts and expressions of repentance.

And the greater the *ingenuity*, the *generosity*, *judgment*, and *penetration* of his mind is, the more will he exercise and indulge a *passionate*, *tender* sense of God's just displeasure; and the more he knows of the greatness, the goodness, and perfection of the divine nature, the fuller of shame and confusion will he be at his own sins and ingratitude.

And on the other hand, the more *dull* and *ignorant* any soul is, the more *base* and *ungenerous* it naturally is, the more *senseless* it is of the goodness and purity of God, so much

the more averſe will it be to all acts of *humble confeſſion* and *repentance*.

Devotion therefore is ſo far from being beſt ſuited to *little ignorant* minds, that a *true elevation* of ſoul, a *lively ſenſe* of honour, and *great knowledge* of God and our ſelves, are the greateſt *natural helps* that our devotion hath.

And on the other hand, it ſhall here be made appear by variety of arguments, that *indevo-*tion is founded in the moſt exceſſive ignorance.

And, *Fiſt*, Our bleſſed Lord, and his Apoſtles, were eminent inſtances of great and frequent devotion. Now if we will grant, (as all Chriſtians muſt grant) that their great devotion was founded in a true knowledge of the nature of devotion, the nature of God, and the nature of man; then it is plain, that all thoſe that are inſenſible of the duty of devotion, are in this exceſſive ſtate of ignorance, they neither know God, nor themſelves, nor devotion.

For if a right knowledge in theſe three reſpects, produces great devotion, as in the caſe of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, then a neglect of devotion muſt be chargeable upon ignorance.

Again; how comes it that moſt people have recourſe to devotion, when they are in ſickneſs, diſtreſs, or fear of death? Is it not becauſe this ſtate ſhews them *more* of the want
of