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CHRISTIAN MAGNANIMITY:

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S E R M O N,

Preached at Princeton, September, 1775—the Sabbath preceeding the

Annual Commencement;

And again with Additions, September 23, 1787

To which is added,

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A D D R E S S

T O T H E

S E N I O R C L A S S,

Who were to receive the Degree of

B A C H E L O R O F A R T S.

B Y

J O H N W I T H E R S P O O N,

D. D. L. L. D.

President of the College of New-Jersey;

P R I N C E T O N :

P R I N T E D B Y J A M E S T O D.

M. DCC. LXXXVII.



IT seems proper to acquaint the public with the reason and intention of this publication. It had been the custom in the college of New-Jersey from its first establishment, that the president should preach a sermon on the Lord's day preceeding commencement, for the benefit of young persons in general; and in the end, address a particular exhortation to the seniors of that year, who were to receive the first degree in the arts and leave college. This custom was very much approved by the author of the following sermon and address, on his taking charge of the college, and therefore regularly continued. For several years, the address was founded upon and had a particular relation to whatever had been the subject of the preceeding discourse. But in the year 1775, when the war with Britain was actually begun, and every thing seemed to breath the spirit of defence, he chose Christian Magnanimity, as the subject of the discourse; and not knowing what might be the event of the important contest, he thought it adviseable to make a collection or summary of all the advices that had been given to the young gentlemen for their conduct in life, in different years, under distinct heads. This produced the one now published, which, with some variations and additions, has been delivered to the class annually, sometimes the sabbath preceeding commencement, and sometimes on commencement day, when the exercises left room for it. The author having now introduced every thing that he thought of sufficient importance to find a place in it, and the length of the piece having become such as not easily to admit

mit of its being all pronounced in one day, especially the day of commencement, he has been induced to publish it, together with the sermon which accompanied it, when first prepared and reduced to a regular system. He the more willingly agreed to this, that several instances have happened of gentlemen educated at this college signifying, that they thought they had received advantage, in many situations, by recollecting the advices given them at their graduation for their conduct in life. He therefore now puts the whole into their hands, and into those of all who are willing to accept of it, as the fruit of long experience and considerable attention to the course of human affairs, earnestly wishing that they may be useful and eminent as citizens, scholars, patriots; and at the same time beseeching them, that in any or all of these characters, they may neither forget nor be ashamed to be Christians.

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I T H E S S A L O N I A N S , i i . 1 2 .

• *That you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory."*

**T**H E present state was intended to be, and I think must, by every person of reflection, be admitted to be a continual trial of the faith and constancy of a Christian. It is therefore a duty we owe to others in general, but in a special manner, the elder to the younger, to give them faithful warning of the temptations and dangers, to which they must, of necessity, be exposed, if they mean to walk in the paths of piety and virtue. It hath often occurred to me, in meditating on this subject, that as false money is most dangerous, when it is likest to the true, so those principles and that character, which approach the nearest to true religion, if notwithstanding they are essentially different from it, will be most ready to impose on an uncautious and unsuspecting mind. Therefore, if there is such a thing as a *worldly virtue*, a system of principles and duty, dictated by the spirit of the world, and the standard of approbation or blame with the men of the world, and if this is at bottom, essentially different from and sometimes directly opposed

opposed to the spirit of the gospel, it must be of all others, the most dangerous temptation, to persons of a liberal education and an ingenuous turn of mind.

This, if I am not mistaken, is really the case. There are some branches of true religion which are universally approved, and which, impiety itself, cannot speak against; such as truth and integrity in speech, honesty in dealing, humanity and compassion to persons in distress. But there are other particulars, in which the worldly virtue and the Christian virtue seem to be different things. Of these I shall select one, as an example, viz. spirit, dignity, or greatness of mind. This seems to be entirely of the worldly cast: It holds a very high place in the esteem of all worldly men: The boldest pretensions are often made to it, by those who treat religion with neglect, and religious persons with disdain or defiance. It is also a virtue of a very dazzling appearance; ready to captivate the mind, and particularly, to make a deep impression on young persons, when they first enter into life. At the same time, the gospel seems to stand directly opposed to it. The humility of the creature, the abasement and contrition of the sinner, the dependence and self-denial of the believer, and above all, the shame and reproach of the cross itself, seem to conspire in obliging us to renounce it.

What shall we say, then, my brethren? shall we say that magnanimity is no virtue at all, and that no such excellence belongs to human nature? or shall we admit that there is beauty and excellence in it—confessing at the same time, that it does not belong

belong to religion, and only say, that though we want this, we have many other and better qualities in its place? To this I can never agree; for every real excellence is consistent with every other; nay, every real excellence is adorned and illustrated by every other. Vices may be inconsistent with each other, but virtues never can. And, therefore, as magnanimity is an amiable and noble quality—one of the greatest ornaments of our nature, so I affirm, that it belongs only to true and undefiled religion, and that every appearance of the one, without the other, is not only defective, but false.

The holy scriptures, it is true, do chiefly insist upon what is proper to humble our pride, and to bring us to a just apprehension of our character and state. This was wise and just, because of that corruption and misery into which we are fallen, the contrary would have been unjust. It is evidently more necessary, in the present state of human nature, to restrain pride, than to kindle ambition. But as the scripture points out our original dignity, and the true glory of our nature, so every true penitent is there taught to aspire after the noblest character, and to entertain the most exalted hopes. In the passage which I have chosen as the subject of my discourse, you see the Apostle exhorts the Thessalonians to walk suitably to the dignity of their character, and the importance of their privileges, which is a short but just description of true and genuine greatness of mind.

My single purpose, from these words, at this time, is to explain and recommend magnanimity as a Christian virtue; and I wish to do it in such

a manner, as neither to weaken its lustre, nor admit any degree of that corrupt mixture, by which it is often counterfeited and greatly debased. Some infidels have in terms affirmed, that Christianity has banished magnanimity, and by its precepts of meekness, humility, and passive submission to injury, has destroyed that nobleness of sentiment, which rendered the ancients so illustrious, and gives so much majesty and dignity to the histories of Greece and Rome. In opposition to this, I hope to be able to shew that real greatness is inseparable from sincere piety, and that any defect in the one, must necessarily be a discernable blemish in the other. With this view, I will (first) give you the principles of magnanimity in general, as a natural quality; (secondly) I will shew what is necessary to give it real value, as a moral virtue, and (thirdly) shew that it shines with the most perfect brightness as a Christian grace; after, will improve the subject, by a practical application of what may be said for your instruction and direction.

First, then, let me state the principles of magnanimity, in general, as a natural quality. I think it must be admitted, that as there is a real difference between bodies as to size and bulk, as well as other sensible qualities, so there is a real character of greatness, or meanness, applicable to the mind, distinct from its other qualities or powers. It is, however, I apprehend, a simple impression, which cannot be explained or further analyzed, but may easily be felt, and is best illustrated by its effects. These may be summed up in the following particulars: To magnanimity it belongeth to attempt  
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I. great and difficult things ; II. to aspire after great and valuable possessions ; III. to encounter dangers with resolution ; IV. to struggle against difficulties with perseverance, and V. to bear sufferings with fortitude and patience.

1, It belongs to magnanimity to attempt great and difficult things. Those, who, from a love of sloth and ease, neglect the exercise or improvement of their powers, and those who apply them with ever so great assiduity and attention, to things mean or of small consequence, are plainly destitute of this quality. We perceive a meanness and want of spirit in this respect, when particular persons fall below their rank in life, or when, as is too frequently the case in any rank, they fall below human nature itself. When a prince, or other person of the first order and importance in human life, busies himself in nothing but the most trifling amusements, or arts of little value, we call it mean ; and when any man, endowed with rational powers, loses them through neglect, or destroys them by the most grovelling sensuality, we say he is acting below himself. The contrary of this, therefore, or the vigorous exertion of all our powers, and particularly, the application of them to things of moment and difficulty, is real magnanimity.

2, It belongs to magnanimity, to aspire after great and valuable possessions. It is more difficult properly to illustrate this as a branch of magnanimity, because of its frequent perversion, which will be afterwards explained. It seems, however, to be necessarily included in the general character. A great mind has great capacities of enjoyment

as well as action. And as there is a difference between the blessings in our view, both in point of dignity and extent, such a man will not be easily satisfied, or put up with what is either mean or scanty, while he can acquire and possess a better and more extensive portion. The large and increasing desires of the human mind, have often been made an argument for the dignity of our nature, and our having been made for something that is great and excellent.

3. It belongs to magnanimity to encounter dangers with resolution. This is inseparable from, and constitutes a leading part of the character. Even the most excellent and valuable services to mankind, if they are attended with no difficulty at all, or meet with no opposition, though they retain the character of utility, yet, for want of this circumstance, they lose that of greatness. Courage is always considered as a great quality; it has had the admiration, or rather adoration, of mankind in every age. Many, when they speak of magnanimity, mean nothing else but courage, and when they speak of meanness, have little other idea but that of timidity. Neither is there, I think, any human weakness, that is more the object of contempt and disdain, than cowardice, which, when applied to life in general, is commonly called pusillanimity.

4. It belongs to greatness, to struggle against difficulties with steadiness and perseverance. Perseverance is nothing else but continued and inflexible courage. We see some persons, who shew the greatest activity and boldness for a season, but  
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time and opposition weakens their force, and seems, if I may speak so, to exhaust their courage, as if they wasted the power by the exertion. Perseverance, therefore, is necessary to greatness. Few things are more contrary to this character, than fickleness and unsteadiness. We commonly join together, the characters of weak and changeable:

5th, In the last place, it belongs to greatness to bear sufferings with fortitude and patience. This is a kindred quality to the former, and is necessary to complete the character of magnanimity. Such is the state of human things, that suffering is in one way or another, wholly unavoidable. It often happens, that difficulties cannot be removed, or enemies cannot be conquered; and then it is the last effort of greatness of mind, to bear the weight of the one or the cruelty of the other, with firmness and patience. This virtue has always been of the greatest reputation. It is a well known saying, of a heathen philosopher, that a great man, suffering with invincible patience, under a weight of misfortunes, is a sight, which even the Gods must behold with admiration.

Having thus pointed out the principles, or rather enumerated the chief effects of magnanimity, as a natural quality, let us now, in the second place, consider what is necessary to give it real value, as a moral virtue. This is of the utmost importance, and must appear so, to all who will consider the subject with attention. That I may set the matter in as clear a light as possible, observe, that to render magnanimity a valuable quality, it must further have the following characters.

1, The object of our desires must be just as well as great. Some of the noblest powers of the human mind, have often been exerted in invading the rights, instead of promoting the interest and happiness of mankind. As the history of the world, is little else than the history of human guilt, so many of the most illustrious names, transmitted down to us, have been those of the most active and successful destroyers of their fellow-creatures. There may be, and there have been in such persons, many or most of the ingredients of natural greatness of mind, but these have only served to make the characters, in the eye of reason, more hideous and detestable.

2, Our desires ought to be governed by wisdom and prudence, as well as justice. If any person either forms difficult prospects, or aspires after great possessions, and in prosecution of his purposes, exerts ever so much courage, fortitude, and patience, yet if these designs are less useful, or these possessions less valuable, than others to which he might have applied the same talents, it cannot deserve the name of true magnanimity. If any person, for example, forms a resolution of exerting his skill, in such feats or performances as have nothing or very little valuable in them, but that they are difficult and uncommon, I think no man will pretend that he has any title to the character of greatness of mind, otherwise a rope-dancer might be a hero: Or if any person should spend a whole life, in the most unwearied application to the single purpose of accumulating wealth, however vast his desires, or however astonishing his success, his  
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merit would be very small. Nay, we must be sensible that he has lost many opportunities of doing signal service to mankind, and of acquiring more valuable and durable enjoyments, while in pursuit of this, which, after all, will disappoint his hopes.

3, The principle of action must be honorable, as well as the achievements illustrious. If a person does things ever so extraordinary in their nature, overcomes the greatest difficulties, or braves the most formidable dangers, merely to make his name famous, we must at once perceive how much it detracts even from his name itself. This is not the language of religion only, it is the language of reason, and the dictate of the human heart. An insatiable thirst of praise, is so far from being amiable, that it is hateful or contemptible. I am sensible that a thirst of fame, is not only apparent in, but seems to have been confessed by many of the most distinguished heroes of antiquity; but as it certainly does abate, in a good degree, the lustre of their great actions, so the indulgence that is given them, upon this head, is wholly owing to the disadvantages they lay under, in a state of heathenism, and their ignorance of a better and nobler principle. Nothing, says an eminent author, can be great, the contempt of which is great; and, therefore, if a contempt of riches, a neglect of fame, and a readiness to sacrifice both to duty and usefulness, is one of the most glorious characters we can conceive, it is plain, that not the deeds, but the principle is the evidence, and not the head nor the hands of man, but the heart is the seat of genuine greatness.

4, In the last place, in order to real greatness, every attempt must be possible and rational, perhaps probable. Nothing is more common than to find persons, under the pretence of great and illustrious designs, prosecuting what is not of any value when obtained, and at the same time, scarcely possible, and no way probable to be obtained at all. This is declining altogether from the line of greatness, and going into the path of extravagance. Again, should any man undertake what he was altogether unable to perform, however excellent the design were in itself, we would not dignify it even with the name of ambition; he would acquire and deserve the character not of greatness, but of folly or madness.

On the whole, it is plain that these moral principles, must enter into the composition of true greatness, and that when they are wanting, the natural characters mentioned before, degenerate into vice, and assume the names of pride, ambition, temerity, ferocity and obstinacy.

This leads me in the third place, to shew not only that there is nothing in real religion, contrary to magnanimity, but that there, and there only, it appears in its beauty and perfection. Let me briefly run over, and apply to religion, the above mentioned ingredients of magnanimity.

1, It is to attempt great and difficult things. Religion calls us to the greatest and most noble attempts, whether in a private or a public view. In a private view, it calls us to resist and subdue every corrupt and sinful passion, however strongly the indulgence is solicited by the tempting object, or recom-

recommended by the artful seducer. The importance and difficulty of this struggle, appears not only from the holy scriptures, but from the experience and testimony of mankind in every age. What cautions are given by Solomon upon this subject? "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." The wisest heathens have inculcated the necessity of self-government, and the danger of surrounding temptation, by many instructive images. But why should I extend this part of the subject? How few are successful in this attempt? This alone is a sufficient proof, that it is great and difficult, and every person exercised to godliness, will be abundantly sensible of it, from the state of his own heart.

In a public view, every good man is called to live and act for the glory of God, and the good of others. Here he has as extensive a scene of activity, as he can possibly desire. He is not indeed permitted to glory or to build an altar to his own vanity, but he is both permitted and obliged to exert his talents, to improve his time, to employ his substance, and to hazard his life in his Maker's service, or his country's cause. Nor am I able to conceive any character more truly great than that of one, whatever be his station or profession, who is devoted to the public good under the immediate order of Providence. He does not seek the bubble reputation in the deadly breach, but he complains of no difficulty and refuses no service, if he thinks he carries the commission of the King of Kings.

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2, The truly pious man aspires after the greatest and most valuable possessions. He despises, indeed, the uncertain and the unsatisfying enjoyments of time. His desires after present enjoyments, are subjected to the will of God. He has given them up without reserve, yet his heavenly Father knoweth that he hath need of these things, and therefore he both asks and hopes to receive what is suitable and necessary, and believes that a little that a just man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked. But the glorious object of the Christian's ambition, is the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The honorable relation he stands in to God, as his adopted child in Christ Jesus, inclines and authorises him to hope for this purchased possession, and enables him to look down with becoming indifference, on all the glory of this transitory world. Let the rich man glory in his riches, and the wise man glory in his wisdom; he only glories in this, that he knoweth the Lord, and shall be with him forever.

3, True piety encounters the greatest dangers with resolution. The fear of God is the only effectual mean to deliver us from the fear of man. Experience has abundantly shewn, that the servants of Christ have adhered to his cause, and made profession of his name, in opposition to all the terrors which infernal policy could present to them, and all the sufferings, with which the most savage inhumanity could afflict them. But as this belongs to the case of persecution for conscience sake, which, by the peculiar kindness of Providence, is exceedingly rare among us, it is proper to observe, that every

every Christian has frequent opportunities of manifesting a holy resolution in encountering the reproach and derision of worldly men, for adhering to his duty. And when we consider how hard it is to bear reproach and scorn, called in scripture "the trial of cruel mockings," there will appear to be no small measure of dignity and heroism in him, who can calmly submit to it from every quarter, rather than depart from his duty. There are not a few, who are apt to boast of their spirit and resolution, who are yet unable to bear reproach, and meanly make the sentiments of others, and the caprice of fashion, the rule of duty, in place of the clear dictates of conscience and the word of God. How contemptible is this, compared to the conduct of that man, who seeks no fame, but by honest means, and fears no reproach for honest actions, but contents himself with a silent and believing regard to him who seeth in secret, and who shall at last bring every work into judgment.

4. True piety perseveres with constancy in opposition to continued trial. This is indeed what distinguishes the Christian warfare from that of every other. It continues through life, and the last enemy to be overcome is death. In all the conflicts between men on earth, the issue may be speedily expected, and the reward immediately bestowed; but in religion, it is only he who shall endure to the end that shall be saved. This adds greatly to the difficulty, and seems to shew not only the excellence and beauty, but the real dignity and magnanimity of the Christian character.

5. In the last place, true piety endures suffering

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ing with patience and fortitude. If we reflect upon the number of suffering martyrs, whose testimonies are upon record, we shall see with what calmness and composure, with what undaunted firmness, and sometimes with what exultation and triumph they have gone to a scaffold or been tied to a stake. Can any person think you, who hath gone to the field of battle, in quest of glory, or who hath braved the danger of the seas, in quest of wealth or power, be once compared with those who have cheerfully given up the precious life, or submitted their bodies to the torture, to keep their consciences undefiled? But, my brethren, Christian patience is much more frequently tried in another manner. The believer has made an unreserved surrender of himself and his all, to the disposal of Providence: His faithfulness to this promise, is brought almost every day to the trial. For the Christian then to suffer reproach, without rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, to be submissive under the loss of substance, and say with Job, "naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord\*."—To yield up relations, and to say with David, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me‡."—To look forward to approaching death, and say with the Apostle Paul, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand†." This is magnanimity indeed; this is the most solid glory to which any child of Adam can possibly attain. I proceed,

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\* Job. i. 21.

‡ 2 Sam. xii. 23.

† 2 Tim. iv. 6.

in the last place, to make some practical improvement of what hath been said :

1, You may learn, from what has been said, that whenever honor differs from conscience, it is a treacherous guide ; wherever spirit and dignity of mind, as a worldly virtue, differs from true religion, and even from the simplicity of the gospel, it is false and spurious. The gospel, it is true, will not suffer men to seek revenge or to delight in it. It will humble them in the sight of God, and make them self-denied in the presence of men, yet it will constrain them not to refuse any duty to the one, or any useful service to the other. It will not suffer them to be ambitious of higher places of honour and trust, but it will make them active and zealous in the duties of that place, in which they already are. It will not suffer them to resent injuries and gratify revenge, but it will make them withstand a king upon his throne, if he presume to interfere in the matters of their God. What is there here that is not noble ?

After all the testimony in favour of true piety, is universal, if carefully attended to. Every one must acknowledge, that ostentation and love of praise, and whatever is contrary to the self-denial of the gospel, tarnishes the beauty of the greatest actions. Courage and modesty, merit and humility, majesty and condescension, appear with tenfold glory, when they are united ; it is impossible to separate them ; to divide, is to destroy them. They are like light and shade in a picture, which are necessary to each other, and which, by their union, constitute the beauty and augment the lustre of the

the piece. So true is this, that the highest polish that any person can receive in commerce with the world, is to have an apparent disposition to prefer the interest of others to his own, to guard against every degree of offence, and to be always ready to oblige. I have often been pleased with that observation of a foreigner of high rank \*, that worldly politeness is only an imperfect imitation of Christian charity, it is nothing else but a studied appearance of that deference to the judgment and attention to the interest of others, which a true Christian hath as the rule of his duty, and the disposition of his heart.

2, Suffer me to observe, that as Christian magnanimity is more excellent than that of the world, it is also more practicable, and in fact, more universal. Worldly magnanimity is what always requires such talents, as do not fall to the lot of many, and such opportunities for its exercise, as very seldom occur. The road to heroism is not open to every man. But that magnanimity, which is the fruit of true religion, being indeed the product of divine grace is a virtue of the heart, and may be attained by persons of mean talents and narrow possessions, and in the very lowest stations of human life. In fact, there have been, and are daily examples of it in every rank. We see the heroic fortitude of the martyrs, as manifest in those of early years, and the weakest sex as in any other; and whoever will visit the solitary walks of life, may find in the lowest stations, humility, thankfulness, patience under affliction, and submission to providence, such as would do honor to the most approved virtue,

\* The Prince of Conti.

tue, and the most enlightened mind. To despise riches, and restrain the motions of envy and impatience in a needy state, is perhaps as truly noble as to improve them wisely in a higher. Thus the honour which is chiefly desirable, is equally open to the rich and to the poor, to the learned and to the unlearned, to the wise and to the unwise, as it cometh from God, who is no respecter of persons. One of the best and happiest effects of serious reflection is, to bring us, in a great measure, all upon a level, as indeed in one most important respect—the magistrate with his robes, the scholar with his learning, and the day-labourer that stands unnoticed, are all upon the same footing—for we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

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TO THE  
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S E N I O R C L A S S,

On the Lord's Day preceeding Commencement,

September 23, 1775.

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GENTLEMEN,

**A**S you have now finished the usual course of study in this place, and are to enter upon public life in a variety of ways, as each shall be determined by inclination or other circumstances, I willingly embrace the opportunity of addressing an exhortation to you, at this important and interesting period of your lives. I do not mean to say much if any thing that you have never heard before, but to lay hold of your present situation, with some hope, that what may be said now, will remain upon your memory, and have an influence upon your future conduct. That I may speak with the greater clearness and precision, I will divide what I have to say, into three branches: I. your duty to God, and the interest of your souls: II. the prosecution of your studies, or the improvement of your talents as members of society: III. Prudence in your commerce with the world in general, your outward provision and other circumstances in life. As

As to the first of these, it is to all men of the greatest moment. Some of you, I know, and more, I hope, are intended for the service of Christ in the ministry. To this we have the universal suffrage, that true religion is absolutely necessary, with which I heartily agree. But I wish those who are destined for other employments, may not sometimes make a comparison here unjust in itself, and dangerous, perhaps even ruinous to their own souls. Because true religion is necessary to a minister, and they are conscious to themselves, or at least suspect that they are without religion; instead of laying to heart the things that belong to their peace, they only determine that they will follow some other calling. But alas, though the difference to the public is very great, the difference to the persons themselves, seems to me but very small. A clergyman without religion, to be sure is a dreadful character, and when visible, a detestable one; but truly one would think at the close of life, it will be but little comfort to a man, that he must go to the place of torment, not as a minister, but as a lawyer, physician, soldier, or merchant. Therefore suffer me to say to you, and to all who now hear me, that the care of your souls is the *one thing needful*. All mankind, of every rank, denomination and profession, are sinners by nature. The ministers of the New Testament have received a commission to preach the gospel to every creature: "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

While I say this, I beg of you to consider that the advantages which you have enjoyed, will be an  
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aggravation of your guilt, if they are unimproved. There is an equity as well as wisdom often to be observed in the Providence of God. Unless reasons of sovereignty, that is reasons unknown to us, prevent it, judgment will be inflicted, when a person or people is ripe for the stroke. Therefore as some plants and seeds, both from their own nature and from the soil and situation in which they are placed ripen sooner than others, so some persons, by the early pains taken upon them, and the privileges they have enjoyed, fill up the measure of their iniquities sooner than others, and are more speedily overtaken with deserved vengeance. There are many common sayings that are the effects of error and prejudice; for example, that which you will be told by many, that the children of good men are as bad as any. If this is intended to insinuate that a regular and pious education affords no ground to hope for good behaviour in after life, it is at once contrary to reason and experience. But if we should say that when young persons piously educated, burst restraining bonds asunder, and are seduced into vicious courses, they commonly run faster and farther than others, it is a certain fact, which may be easily accounted for, and affords an important instruction to all.

After intreating you to lay religion to heart, I must beseech you to guard against being too easily satisfied in a matter of infinite moment. Do not think it enough to be prudent, cautious, or decent in your conduct, or to attain a character formed upon worldly principles and governed by worldly motives. I am not against (as you all know) introducing

roducing every argument against sin, and shewing you that loose practices are ruinous to name, body, and estate. Neither is it wrong that you should fortify every pious resolution by the addition of these motives. But alas! the evil lies deeper. "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." True religion must arise from a clear and deep conviction of your lost state, by nature and practice, and an unfeigned reliance on the pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace of God.

Suffer me, upon this subject, earnestly to recommend to all that fear God, to apply themselves from their earliest youth, to the exercises of piety, a life of prayer and communion with God. This is the source from which a real Christian must derive the secret comfort of his heart, and which alone will give beauty, consistency, and uniformity to an exemplary life. The reason why I have mentioned it on this occasion is, that youth, when the spirits are lively and the affections vigorous and strong, is the season when this habit must be formed. There are advantages and disadvantages attending every stage of life. An aged Christian will naturally grow in prudence, vigilance, usefulness, attention to the course of Providence and subjection to the divine will, but will seldom attain to greater fervour of affection and life in divine worship, than he had been accustomed to from his early years. On the contrary, he will generally see it necessary instead of trusting to occasional impulses to guard and strengthen the habit by order and form.

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Be companions of them that fear God. Esteem them always most highly, and shun, as a contagious pestilence, the society not only of loose persons, but of those especially whom you perceive to be infected with the principles of infidelity, or enemies to the power of religion. Many of these are much more dangerous to pious persons than open profligates. As for these last, decency is against them, the world itself condemns them, reason despises them, and prudence shuns them. He must have a very mean taste indeed who is capable of finding pleasure in disorder and riot. If I had no higher pleasure on earth than in eating and drinking, I would not chuse to eat and drink with the drunk-en. Order, neatness, elegance and even moderation itself are necessary to exalt and refine the pleasures of a sensual life. Therefore I will not allow myself to suppose, that I shall afterwards hear of any of you roaring and swearing in taverns, or wasting your bodies and estates by lewdness and debauchery, or that you take pleasure in those who do so. But be especially careful to avoid those who are enemies to vital piety, who do not pretend to speak directly against religion, but give every ill name they can think of, to all who seem to be in earnest on that subject, and vilify the exercises of religion under the names of whining, cant, grimace, and hypocrisy. These are often unhappily successful in making some uncautious persons ashamed of their Redeemer's name, his truths, his laws, his people and his cross.

I need hardly observe that this is not to be understood as recommending pharisaical pride and su-  
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periciousness far lets a rash and presumptuous judging of the state of others. It is not only lawful but our duty, to have a free communication with our fellow-citizens, for the purposes of social life: It is not only lawful but our duty to be *courteous* and to give every proper evidence of respect and attention to others, according to their rank and place in society. What I mean to caution you against, is an unnecessary, voluntary intercourse, such as has inclination for its motive and pleasure for its object. With respect to this, we need not hesitate to say with the inspired prophet, "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

2. I come now to speak a little upon the prosecution of your studies and the improvement of your talents. Your education in a seminary of learning, is only intended to give you the elements and first principles of science, which should whet your appetite for more, and which will enable you to proceed with an assured hope of success. It hath been generally a favourite point with me, to recommend the union of piety and literature, and to guard young persons against the opposite extremes. We see sometimes, the pride of un sanctified knowledge do great injury to religion, and on the other hand, we find some persons of real piety despising human learning, and disgracing the most glorious truths by a meanness and indecency hardly sufferable in their manner of handling them. On this account, industry and application to study is of the utmost importance to those who are intended for the office of the ministry.

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But I have it further in view, to recommend to you all, without exception, a life of diligence and application. Avoid sloth as a dangerous enemy. Fear it, hate it, and despise it. It is a common saying, that men do not know their own weakness, but it is as true, and a truth more important that they do not know their own strength. I desire that you will receive the following information from me, which I dare say every person of judgment and experience will confirm, that multitudes of moderate capacity have been useful in their generation, respected by the public, and successful in life, while those of superior talents from nature, by mere slothfulness and idle habits, or self-indulgence, have lived useless and died contemptible. There is also a disposition in young people, which you know I have often set myself to oppose, to think that loose, irregular sallies, and sometimes even vicious liberties are a sign of spirit and capacity. The very contrary is the truth. It requires no genius at all to do mischief. Persons of the greatest ability have generally been lovers of order. Neither is there any instance to be found of a man's arriving at great reputation or usefulness, be his capacity what it might, without industry and application.

Suffer me here, in a particular manner, to recommend to you a firmness of mind and steady perseverance, as of the utmost moment to your progress and success. Whatever a man's talents from nature may be, if he apply himself to what is not altogether unsuitable to them, and hold on with steadiness and uniformity, he will be useful  
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and happy, but if he be loose and volatile, impatient of the slowness of things in their usual course, and shifting from project to project, he will probably neither be the one nor the other.

I am somewhat at a loss what to say as to character and reputation, yet it is so important a point, that it must not be omitted. True religion should furnish you with a higher and nobler principle to govern your conduct than the desire of applause from men. Yet in subordination, to what ought to be the great purpose of life, the approbation of the Supreme Judge, there is a just and laudable ambition to do what is praise-worthy among men. This ought not to be extinguished in the minds of youth; being a powerful spur and incitement to virtuous or illustrious actions. A truly good man will seek no praise but by honest means, and will be superior even to disgrace itself, if brought upon him by adherence to his duty. Yet will he also be tender and careful not to give just cause to any to impeach his conduct. If I might be permitted to direct your views upon this subject, I would say, consider that your character is already beginning to form. Every step you take further in life, will both ascertain and spread it. You ought also to be informed, that notwithstanding all the hackneyed complaints of the partiality and censoriousness of the world, a man's real character, in point of ability, is *never* mistaken, and but *seldom* in point of morals. That there are many malicious and censorious persons I agree, but lies are not half so durable as truth. There is an impartiality in a diffusive public, which will shew itself

itself where means of information are afforded to it. Therefore reverence the judgment of mankind without idolizing it. Be as cautious as possible to do nothing that deserves censure, and as little concerned as possible what reproaches may fall upon you undeserved. It is not a contradiction, but perfectly consistent to say, a man should be tender and even jealous of his character, and yet not greedy of praise. There is an amiableness and dignity in the first, but a meanness and littleness in the last.

Another advice near a-kin to the last is, do as much as you can to deserve praise, and yet avoid as much as possible the hearing of it. This is but another view of the same subject; and that it may be the more useful, and my intention in it the more manifest, I will extend it both to praise and dispraise. When you come into public life, and become the objects of general attention, not only guard against fishing for applause, and being inquisitive after what people think or say of you, but avoid knowing it as much as you decently can. My reason for this is, that whether you will or not, you will hear as much of the slanders of your enemies as you will bear with patience, and as much of the flattery of your friends, or interested persons as you will bear with humility. Therefore prepare yourself for both, but seek for neither. Several eminent authors, as you doubtless know, have given it as an advice to young clergymen, and other public speakers, to get a friend who is a good judge, and intreat him to make remarks upon their composition, carriage, delivery, &c. with fidel-

fidelity. I have nothing to say against the goodness of the advice in itself, but at the same time, I have no great conviction of the necessity or even the utility of it. It is very seldom that advice is asked in this manner, but with a view to obtain a compliment, and still seldomer that it is given with sufficient freedom and impartiality. If any man has humility and self-denial enough to wish to know his own faults, there will be little difficulty in discovering them. Or if we could suppose, there were difficulty to himself, his enemies or rivals, or talkative people, though they be neither the one nor the other, will supply the defect. Perhaps you will think, that in the strictures of malice and envy, there is generally an acrimony that has no great tendency to reform; like a rusty knife, which makes a very painful wound, though not very deep. I agree to this fully, and yet affirm, that there is so much the more virtue, so much the more wisdom, and perhaps I may add, so much the more pleasure in making this use of them.

I conclude this part of my subject, with advising you to maintain a friendship with one another, and to carry the intimacies of early life, through the whole of it. To this I add, that you ought to desire and cultivate the correspondence of men of piety and learning. Man made for society, derives his chief advantages of every kind, from the united efforts of many conspiring to the same end. As to piety, nothing is more essential to it, than social communication. It properly consists in the supreme love of God, and fervent charity to all men. The Christian also hath need of the assistance

ance of others in his passage through this world, where he has so much opposition to encounter. Those who deserve this character, are said to be pilgrims and strangers in the earth. Therefore they ought to keep together, lest they lose their way. They comfort each other in distress, they assist each other in doubts and difficulty, they emulate each other by their example, and they assist each other by their prayers.

This is no less the case in respect to literature. It has been observed, that great and eminent men have generally, in every nation, appeared in clusters. The reason of this probably is, that their society and mutual intercourse greatly adds to their improvement, and gives force and vigour to the talents which they may severally possess. Nothing is so powerful an incitement to diligence, or so kindles the best sort of ambition, as the friendship, advice, and assistance of men of learning and worth. The approbation of one such, is of more value to a noble mind, than peals of applause from an undiscerning multitude. Besides, the assistance which men of letters give to each other, is really necessary in the execution of particular works of great compass and utility. If it is by the labours of preceding ages, that it is now possible in one life to attain to such a degree of knowledge as we have sometimes seen, so it is by the concurrence of many friends lending their assistance, that one man has been sometimes able to present to the public, a system of science, which without that aid, he alone would have in vain attempted to bring to perfection. There is no circumstance which  
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throws this new country so far back in point of science, as the want of public libraries, where thorough researches might be made, and the small number of learned men to assist in making these researches practicable, easy or complete.

3. The last head on which I promised to give you my advice, was prudence in your communication with the world in general, your outward provision and other circumstances that conduce to the happiness and comfort of life. On this subject, I begin with what I have often recommended to you, frugality in the management of your affairs, order and exactness in your dress, furniture, books and keeping of accounts. Nothing could be further from my mind than to recommend the temper or conduct of avaricious men, whose sordid souls have no higher ambition, and indeed, hardly any other desire than that of getting pelf. This is not only unbecoming a gentleman and a scholar, but in my opinion, wholly inconsistent with the character. I never knew an instance of a person in whom this disposition took place in early life, that could apply to study, or that became eminent in any thing that was good. The opposite vice is the common fault of youth, and it is against this I would caution you. The frugality I would recommend, is that of an independent mind, that fears and scorns subjection to others, and remembers the just saying of Solomon, that the borrower is servant to the lender. That frugality which arises from order and œconomy, is not only consistent with, but it is the parent of liberality of sentiment and generosity of conduct. It is indeed the source

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of beneficence, for no man can bestow out of an empty purse. On the other hand, covetousness and profusion, are by no means repugnant to each other, and indeed they are more frequently joined than many apprehend. The stricture of Sallust in the character of Catiline, *alieni appetens sui profusus*, has been often cited, and may generally be applied to loose and profligate livers. I hope therefore you will learn betimes to distinguish between the virtue and the vice, and to adhere to the one as much as you despise the other.

I will make an observation here, which may be applied not only to the distinction of character in this instance, but in almost every other that has been or shall be mentioned. It will be much your interest, if you learn betimes to make not a hasty but a deliberate and candid judgment, when you infer character from appearances. The habits of life which men contract, give a bias to their opinions and even a tincture to their conversation and phraseology. Persons inclined to levity and dissipation, will often ascribe to covetousness, what arises from very different causes. I have known even in youth, a person declining to engage in a party of pleasure, accused by his companions as mean and sneaking, and afraid of his purse, when, in reality, it was not that he loved money more, but pleasure less. It may sometimes happen, that a person of principle, will see it proper to decline meetings of festivity, though not directly sinful as an unnecessary waste of time, or from some other circumstance to him dangerous and ensnaring. I have also seen persons more advanced in years, who

who from a habit, perhaps a necessary habit of strict temperance, and retired manner of life, were very sparing of personal expence, and even not much disposed to social intercourse, and therefore called close or covetous, and yet when applied to, for pious or charitable purpose, would be much more liberal than others of an opposite turn of mind. Observations perfectly similar might be made upon the opposite character of liberality. It is not every kind of openness of heart that indicates profusion. We are told by Solomon\*, "that the liberal soul shall be made fat," and by the prophet Isaiah, that "the liberal desireth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall be established †" From these contrasted remarks, I infer, that as it is seldom necessary to judge peremptorily of others, so forbearance and the most charitable allowance, is both our duty and interest.

In the next place, I recommend to you, humility of heart and meekness of carriage. I consider in this place, the grace of humility as a virtue especially serviceable to your earthly comfort. I consider and mean to treat it as a maxim of worldly prudence. The scripture seems to point it out as peculiarly necessary for this purpose, and to annex the promise of earthly happiness to the practice of it: "Blessed are the meek, says our Saviour, for they shall inherit the earth ‡." I would understand him as saying, every good man shall inherit the kingdom of Heaven, but those who excel in meekness, shall of all others have comfort on earth. In many different views, we may see the propriety of

\* Prov. xi. 23.

† Isa. xxxii. 8.

‡ Mat. v. 5.

of this connexion. Nothing is more offensive to others, than a proud, assuming manner. It not only magnifies every fault, but vitiates even good conduct. It is not only odious to virtuous persons, but it is equally, if not more so, to those who are without principle. Some vices recommend a man to the vicious in the same line as one drunkard is pleased with the sight of another; but nothing is so hateful to a proud man, as another of the same character, nor is offence sooner given or taken than between those, who, in this respect, perfectly resemble one another. This vice is not only odious to persons of understanding and reflection, but to the most ignorant, being as easily perceived as it is universally hated.

The moral virtue of meekness and condescension, is the best ground-work even of worldly politeness, and prepares a man to receive that polish, which makes his behaviour generally agreeable, and fits him for intercourse with persons in the higher ranks of life. The same virtue, by the composure and self-command that accompanies it, enables a man to manage his affairs to advantage, in whatever calling he may be engaged, or in whatever station he may be placed. A good shop-keeper is commonly remarkable for this quality. People love to go where they meet with good words and gentle treatment, whereas the peevish and petulant may be said to have a repelling quality about them, that will not suffer any body to approach them.

To complete the whole, meekness of spirit is as useful to a man's self as meekness of carriage is  
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acceptable to others. The meek suffer much less from the unavoidable evils of life, than those of a contrary disposition. Many cross accidents of the less important kind, are in a manner annihilated when they are born with calmness. The injury they do us, is not owing half so much to their weight or severity, as to the irritability of their own minds. It is evident, that the same disposition must greatly alleviate calamities of a heavier kind; and from analogy you may perceive, that as it mitigates the sorrows, it multiplies and adds to the sweetness of the comforts of life. A moderate portion, gives greater satisfaction to the humble and thankful, than the most ample possessions to the proud and impatient.

Nearly allied to the above virtue, is the government of your passions, and therefore of this, I shall say but little. Every one must be sensible how important it is, both for the success of your worldly callings and your usefulness in public life, to have your passions in due subjection. Men of furious and ungoverned tempers, prone to excess in attachment and resentment, either as to persons or things, are seldom successful in their pursuits, or respected and useful in their stations. Persons of ungoverned passions are almost always fickle and changeable in their measures, which is of all things the most fatal to important undertakings. These generally require time and patience to bring them to perfection. As to public and political life in particular, the necessity of self-government is so great and so universally acknowledged, that it is usual to impute it in eminent men, not to principle,

ple, but to address and policy. It is commonly said, that politicians have no passions. Without enquiring into this, I shall only say, that whatever truth may be in it, is still in favour of my argument. The hypocrisy does honor to the virtue. If the appearance be so necessary or so useful, what must be the value of the reality?

I will here take an opportunity of confuting, or at least correcting a common saying or proverbial sentiment, many of which indeed that obtain belief in a blinded world, are nothing but false colouring and deception. It is usual to say in defence of sudden and violent passion, that it is better to speak freely and openly, than to harbour and cover secret heart-malice. Perhaps I might admit that this would be true, if the inward rage were to be as violent, and continue as long, and return as often as indulged passion. Every person must agree, that wherever there is a deep and lasting hatred, that never forgets nor forgives, but waits for the opportunity of vengeance, it deserves to be considered as a temper truly infernal. But in most instances of offence between man and man, to restrain the tongue is the way to govern the heart. If you do not make mention of an injury, you will truly and speedily forgive it, and perhaps literally forget it. Rage is in this respect like a fire, if a vent is given to it, it will increase and spread while there is fuel to consume, but if you can confine and stifle it, you will completely extinguish it.

To the government of the passions succeeds the government of the tongue. This indeed will in a great measure, be the effect of the former, and there-

therefore is recommended by all the same arguments, yet it deserves very particular attention separately as a maxim of prudence. There are great indiscretions in speech, that do not arise from passion, but from inattention and want of judgment as to the propriety of time and place, and indeed many other sources. I would therefore earnestly recommend to you, to habituate yourselves to restraint in this respect, especially in the early part of life. "Be swift to hear (says Solomon) and slow to speak." Forwardness in speech is always thought an assuming thing in youth, and in promiscuous companies, is often considered as an insult as well as an indiscretion. It is very common for the world in general and still more so for men of judgment and penetration, to form an opinion of a character on the whole, from some one circumstance, and I think there are few things more unfavourable in this way, than a talkative disposition. If the first time I am in company, especially with a young man, he talks incessantly and takes the whole conversation to himself, I shall hardly be brought to have a good opinion of him, whether what he says be good or evil, sense or nonsense. There are some persons, who, one might say, give away so much wisdom in their speech, that they leave none behind to govern their actions.

But the chief danger of an ungoverned tongue, is, that it kindles the fire of contention among others, and makes enemies to a man's self. Solomon says, "where no talebearer is, the strife ceaseth. A little experience will shew you, how unsafe it is to use much freedom in speech with absent

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sent persons. In that case you put yourself wholly in the power of those that hear you, and are in danger, not only from their treachery or malice, but from their mistakes, ignorance and imprudence. Perhaps it would be too rigid to say, that you ought never to speak to a man's prejudice in his absence, what you would be unwilling to say in his presence. Some exceptions to this rule, might easily be conceived. But both prudence and candour require that you should be very reserved in this respect, and either adhere strictly to the rule, or be sure that good reasons will justify a departure from it.

This will be a very proper place to give you some directions, as the most proper conduct when you suffer from the tongues of others. Many and grievous are the complaints of what men suffer from the envenomed shafts of envy and malice. And there certainly is a strong disposition in some to invent, and in many to believe slanderous falsehoods. The prevalence of party, either in religion or politics, never fails to produce a plentiful crop of this poisonous weed. One of the most important rules upon this subject is, that when an accusation is in any degree well-founded, or suspicious appearances have given any occasion for it, the first duty is to reform what is really wrong, and keep at a distance from the disputed limit.

This will bring good out of evil, and turn an injury into a benefit. But in cases as it may often happen, when the slander is perfectly groundless, I hold it to be in general the best way wholly to despise it. Time and the power of truth, will of themselves do justice in almost every case of this kind,

kind, but if you show an impatience under it, a disposition to resent it, or a solicitude to refute it, the far greatest part of mankind will believe it not the less but the more. If slander were a plant or an animal, I would say it was of a very strange nature, for that it would very easily die, but could not easily be killed. It discovers a greatness of mind and a conscious dignity to despise slanders, which of itself commands respect; whereas to be either offended or distressed by them, shews a weakness not amiable, whether the accusation be true or false.

This rule I do not say is wholly without exception; there may be cases where vindications may be necessary and effectual, but they are not many, and I think I have seen in the course of my life, reason to make the following distinction: If the accusation or slander be special, and relate to a particular fact, fixed by time, place and other circumstances, and if it be either wholly false or essentially mistaken in its nature and tendency, the matter may be explained and justice may be done. But if it be a general character, that happens to be imputed to a man, he ought to attempt no refutation of it but by conduct; the more he complains of it, the more he speaks of it, the more he denies it, it will be the more believed. For example, if it be affirmed that a man spoke profanely in a certain company, at a certain place and time, when he was not present at all, it may be easily and completely refuted, but if he is accused of being proud, contentious, covetous, or deceitful, although these accusations are pretended to be supported by a train

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of facts, it is better to let them wholly alone, and suffer his conduct to speak for itself. There are instances in history of accusations brought with much plausibility and urged with great vehemence, which yet have been either from the beginning disbelieved or by time confuted; which occasioned the Latin proverb, *Magna est veritas et prævalebit.*

All the above-mentioned particulars may be said to be the happy effects of wisdom and benevolence, united, or rather perhaps in the light in which they have been stated to you, they are chiefly the proper fruits of that wisdom which is "profitable to direct." But I must add another advice, which is the immediate effect of benevolence and good-will, that is, be ready to assist others and do good as you have opportunity. As every thing is liable to be abused, sometimes the maxims of prudence take a wrong direction, and close the heart against impressions of sympathy and tenderness towards others in distress. Sometimes indeed, the coolness and composure of spirit, and that self-command which is the effect of reflection and experience, is mistaken for a callous and unfeeling heart, though it is a very different thing. To give way to the agitation of passion, even under the finest feelings, is the way to prevent instead of promoting usefulness. A parent, overwhelmed with surprize and anxiety, at a calamitous accident that has befallen a child, shall be incapable either of reflection or activity, and shall sometimes even need the assistance which he ought to give. But independently of this, there are certainly some persons who contract a habit of indifference as to the wants or desires of others,

others, and are not willing to put themselves to any inconvenience, unless their own particular concerns may be promoted at the same time.

In opposition to this, I mean to recommend to you a disposition to oblige, not merely by civil expressions and an affable deportment, but by taking a real interest in the affairs of others. Be not unwilling to lend your advice, your assistance, your interest to those that need them. Those who cannot spare pecuniary assistance, may do many acts of valuable friendship. Let every neighbour perceive that you are not ready to quarrel needlessly, nor insist pertinaciously on trifles, and if you live to obtain credit and influence, let them be employed to assist the deserving of every class. If you undertake to do the business of others, attend to it with the same fidelity, and if possible, with greater punctuality than you would to your own. Some are ready to excuse or justify a contrary conduct, by complaining of the ingratitude or injustice of mankind. But in my opinion, these complaints are contrary to truth and experience. There may be many particular persons both ungrateful and unjust; but in the world in general, there will be found a clearness of discernment, and an exactness of retribution. Our Saviour tells us with respect to one fault; that of rash judging what is equally true as to injuries of every kind. "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again; good measure pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom\*." This, in my opinion, may and ought

\* Luke vi. 38.

ought to be understood both ways: As the churlish nabal generally meets with his match, so persons of a humane and friendly disposition, shall reap the fruits of it to them or theirs. The truth is, the disposition itself is not in its perfection, but when there is no regard to an immediate return. If you give looking for a speedy recompence, it is not giving, but selling. You may, however, safely trust to the promise of God: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days§." I have known many instances of kindnesses that were both remembered and requited, after they had been long forgotten by him who bestowed them. Nay, sometimes they may be repaid in another generation. It is no inconsiderable legacy for a man to leave to his children, that he had always been a friend to others, and never refused his assistance to those who stood in need of it.

It will not be an improper place, here to introduce a few words upon a subject, which has been often handled by writers of the first class: I mean private friendship. Some writers against religion, have actually made it an objection against Christianity, that it does not recommend private friendship or the love of our country. If this were true, it would be no fault, because the universal benevolence recommended by the gospel, includes all private affections, when they are consistent with it, and is far superior to them when they are contrary to it. But in fact, the instances of private friendship mentioned and alluded to in

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§ Ecl. xi. 1.

Scripture, are a sufficient recommendation of it, and even our blessed Saviour himself is said to have distinguished the youngest of his disciples with particular affection. I will therefore observe with most authors, that there is no true friendship, but what is founded upon virtuous principles, and directed to virtuous purposes. To love a person who is not worthy of love, is not a virtue but an error. Neither is there any dependance to be placed in trying cases upon persons unprincipled at bottom. There never was a true friend who was not an honest man. But besides this important truth, it is further to be observed, that there is a species of friendship which is neither founded on virtue nor vice, but mere weakness of mind. Some persons having no resources in themselves, are obliged to have recourse to some other, upon whom they may lean, and without whom they seem as if they could neither think, act, nor even exist. This sort of friendship is to be seen particularly in princes and persons of high rank, and is generally called favouritism; but the same thing may be observed in all ranks, though in the lower, it is not so conspicuous. We may say of it, that it is like some of those plants that are false and spurious in their kind, which have some of the appearances, but want the most valuable and essential qualities of those that are genuine. Such friendships are commonly contracted by caprice or accident, and uncertain in their duration, being liable to be dissolved by the same means. Valuable friendship is the result of judgment as well as affection; it is one of the greatest comforts of life

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as well as one of the greatest ornaments to human nature, and its genuineness may be discerned by the following mark—that though it is particular, it is not exclusive. When there is a great, but virtuous attachment to a person who deserves it, it will make a man not less but more friendly to all others, as opportunity or circumstances shall call him to serve them.

You will perhaps be surpris'd that as I have so often expressed a desire of your being accomplish'd in every respect, that I have heretofore said nothing or but little on that politeness and grace in behaviour, which is so much talk'd of, and which, in some late writings, has been so highly extoll'd. What has been already explain'd to you, I hope will lay the foundation for the most solid, valuable and durable politeness. Think of others as reason and religion require you, and treat them as it is your duty to do, and you will not be far from a well-polish'd behaviour. As to any thing further, that is external in mode and propriety of carriage, it can never be learn'd but by intercourse with the best company. As to the writings above refer'd to, the chief of which are Rochefcault's Maxims, and Chesterfield's Letters. I think of them as of many other free writings, that when view'd properly, they may be as useful, as by being view'd otherwise, they are generally pernicious. They contain a digested system of hypocrisy, and betray such pride and self-sufficiency, and such hatred or contempt of mankind, as may well be an antidote against the poison which they mean to convey. Nay, one would think

think the publication of such sentiments is ridiculous; because it is telling you that they desire to be polite, and at the same time that this politeness consists in taking you by the weak side, and displaying their own address by over-reaching yours.

I must also observe, that such writers give in general, a very unjust as well as dishonorable view of nature and mankind. I remember indeed Dean Swift says,

As Rochfocault his maxims drew

From nature, I believe them true.

What must I say to this? shall I say that he did not draw his maxims from nature? I will not, because I think he did. Am I obliged then to admit them to be true? By no means. It is nature, but it is just such a view of nature, as a man without principle must take. It is in himself, that all the error and exaggeration is to be found.

Those who discover an universal jealousy, and indiscriminate contempt for mankind in general, give very little reason to think well of themselves. Probably men are neither so good as they pretend, nor so bad as they are often thought to be. At any rate, candour in sentiment as well as conduct, as it is an important duty of religion, so it is a wise maxim for the conduct of life; and I believe these two things are very seldom if ever found either separate from or opposed to each other.

The last advice that I shall offer you, is to preserve a sacred and inviolable regard to sincerity and truth. Those who have received their education here, or at least who have completed it, must know how much pains have been taken to establish  
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the universal and unalterable obligation of truth. This is not however mentioned now to introduce the general subject, of to shew the guilt, folly and danger of deliberate interested falshood, but to warn you against the smaller breaches of truth now so very common, such as want of punctuality in appointments, breach of promise in small matters, officious falshoods, that is, deceiving children, sick persons or others for their good; jocular deceptions, which are not intended to continue long or be materially hurtful to others. Not one of these is without sin before God, and they are much more hurtful than is commonly supposed. So very sacred a thing indeed is truth, that the very shadow of departure from it is to be avoided. Suppose a man only to express his present purpose as to futurity, for example, to say he will go to such a place to-morrow, though there is no proper obligation given, nor any right to require performance; yet if he does so often, he will acquire the character of levity and unsteadiness, which will operate much to his disadvantage. Let me therefore recommend to you a strict, universal and scrupulous regard to truth.—It will give dignity to your character—it will put order into your affairs—it will excite the most unbounded confidence; so that whether your view be your own interest, or the service of others, it promises you the most assured success. I am also persuaded, that there is no virtue that has a more powerful influence upon every other; and certainly, there is none by which you can draw nearer to God himself, whose distinguishing character is, that he will not, and he cannot lie.

F I N I S.