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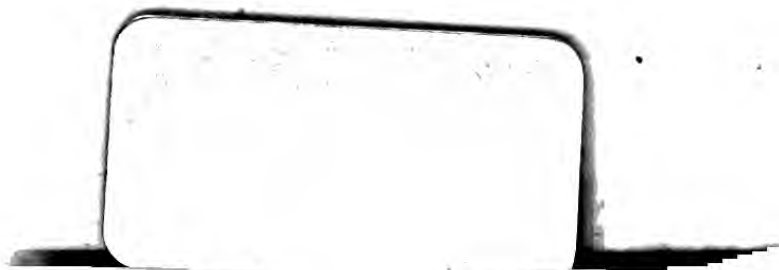
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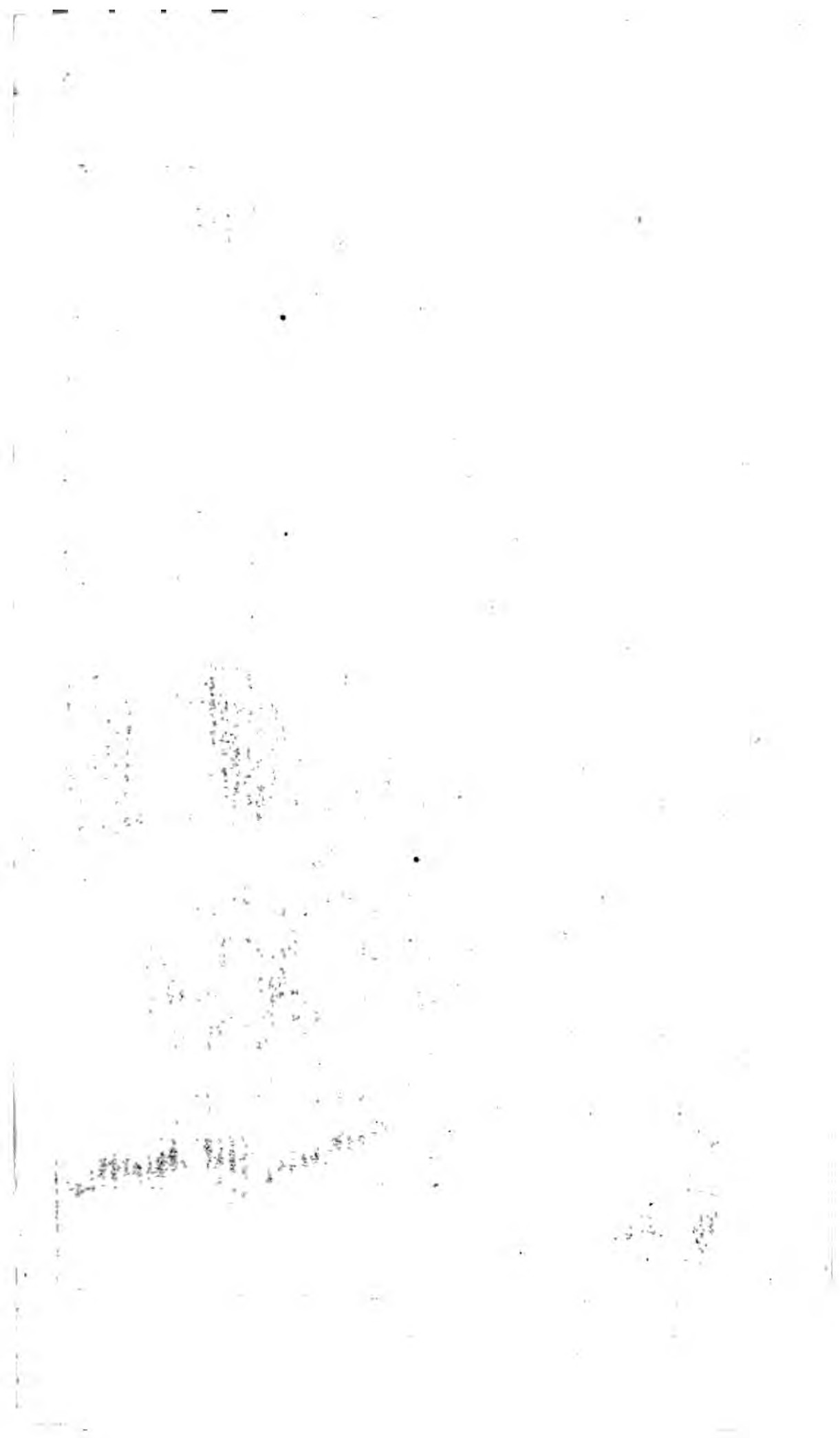


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VOL. I.

Lud. Du Gaernier inv. et sculp.

B. 1.  
THE  
L A D I E S  
LIBRARY.

VOLUME *the* FIRST.

WRITTEN *by* a LADY.

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Published by  
Sir RICHARD STEELE.

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The SIXTH EDITION.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for J. and R. T O N S O N and  
S. D R A P E R in the *Strand*.

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M D C C L I.





To the Right Honourable the  
**C O U N T E S S**  
**O F**  
***BURLINGTON.***

M A D A M,



Humbly desire Your Ladyship would forgive the Presumption I am now guilty of in presenting You with this Book. I do it from  
V O L. I.      A 3      the

## DEDICATION.

the high Honour and Veneration I have for Your great Merit and Virtue. It cannot, I know, furnish Your Ladyship with new Reflexions; and the Ladies, of whom You are the happy Mother, have an Example before them, more prevalent to form them to every thing Praise-worthy, than any Precepts they can find in the Works of the best Writers. But as there is much Curiosity in these Papers, and great Strength and Force in the Reasonings of them, give me leave to offer this Collection for the Use of Female Life, as a Testimony of the Respect, which I, with all who are honoured with the least Acquaintance with You, must pay to Your Ladyship for the eminent Example You have given the  
World

## DEDICATION.

World in the important Characters of a Wife and a Mother.

To Command with the Mien of making a Request, to Oblige with the Aspect of receiving Favours, and to win Affection without other Design than making all People happy who converse with Her, or depend upon Her, are Excellencies peculiar to my Lady BURLINGTON. But as there is a Complaisance, which, like sincere Friendship, speaks our good Opinion in our ordinary Looks and Actions, more than any Language can do it, I here shall go no farther than just to declare myself, with great Deference, among the Admirers of Your great Goodness and Virtue, and beg of Your Ladyship  
to

DEDICATION.

to forgive my saying thus much,  
for the Forbearance of saying more,  
on a Subject of which I am so very  
fond, as that of expressing myself,

M A D A M,

*Your Ladyship's most Devoted,*

*most Obedient, and most*

*Humble Servant,*

RICHARD STEELE.



# P R E F A C E.



*THE Reader is to understand that the Papers, which compose the following Volumes, came into my Hands upon frequent mention in the Spectator of a Lady's Library. They are suppos'd to be collected out of the several Writings of our greatest Divines, and are dispos'd under proper Heads, in order to fix in the Mind general Rules for Conduct in all the Circumstances of the Life of Woman.*

*In Matters, where both Sexes are equally concern'd, the Words Man and Men are made use of, but the Matter does not for that Reason the less relate to Women, or argue that the Work is not principally intended for the Information of the Fair Sex.*

*They were referred to me as what were at first intended by the Compiler for a Guide to her own Conduct, and if thought worth publishing, to be of the same Service to others of her Sex, who have not the same Opportunities of searching into various Authors, and laying before themselves, by that means, all the different Relations in which they are, or may be engaged.*

## P R E F A C E.

*I put them into the Care of a Reverend Gentleman much better qualified for the Publication of such a Work, and whose Life and Character are not so subject to the Exceptions which the Levity of some of my Writings, as well as other Circumstances, may expose a Work as passing through my Hands only. Tho' he was so good as to peruse the Papers, he would not allow that the Exception I made against my being the Publisher was of Weight; for he would have it, that its coming out with my Name, would give an Expectation that I had assembled the Thoughts of many ingenious Men on pious Subjects, as I had heretofore on Matters of a different Nature: By this means, he believes, the Work may come into the Hands of Persons who take up no Book that has not Promises of Entertainment in the first Page of it. For the rest, he was of Opinion it would make its own way, and I easily submitted to suffer a little Rallery, when I had Hopes of being the means of promoting the Interests of Religion and Virtue.*

*I wish there was a Word to describe those Men who can get little farther than bare Dispositions towards Goodness, and are so unhappy as to be incapable of becoming themselves great Examples of what they profess to admire. What I mean is, that I want to find a Word which should as Modestly express a Virtuous Man, as the Word Philosopher does a Wise one. This would introduce the Endeavours of Men who think*

## P R E F A C E.

*think better than they live, without Prejudice from any Imperfection in their own Characters.*

*This is all I shall think fit to say in Apology for my being the Publisher of this Library.*

*As to the Work itself, I find it will not be possible to arraign any Sentiments in it without falling upon some eminent Divine from whom this Lady has borrowed her Thoughts; and the Variety of the Writers to whom she is beholden, as well as of the Matter which she treats, gives a just Pretension to the Title of The Ladies Library.*

*I am only her Gentleman-Usber, and if I can be so happy as to lead the Fair into their Closets, to the Perusal of this useful as well as delightful Entertainment, I shall be in as high Joy, as ever I observed any young Man in leading out from a Play or an Opera. Farther Merit I do not pretend to have in a Work, which, if carefully perused, will improve the Readers, as Daughters, Wives, Mothers, and Widows; and I humbly conceive, can do them no Injury in general, as they are Women, or as they are Beauties.*

*Bloomsbury-Square,  
July 21, 1714.*

**R. Steele.**

C O N-

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T H E



# THE LADIES Library.

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## INTRODUCTION.

**B**EING by nature more inclined to such Enquiries as by general Custom my Sex is debarr'd from, I could not resist a strong Propensity to Reading; and having flattered myself that what I read dwelt with Improvement upon my Mind, I could not but conclude that, a due regard being had to different Circumstances of Life, it is a great Injustice to shut Books of Knowledge from the Eyes of Women.

Musing one Day in this Tract of Thought, I turned over some Books of *French* and *English*, written by the most polite Writers of the Age, and began to consider what Account they gave of our Composure, different from that of the other Sex. But indeed, when I dipped into those Writings, were it possible to conceive otherwise, I could not have believed, from their general and undistinguish'd Aspersions, that many of these Men had any such Relations as Mothers, Wives, or Sisters. One of them makes a Lover say in a Tragedy,

*Thou art Woman, a true Copy of the first,  
In whom the Race of all Mankind was curst:  
Your Sex by Beauty was to Heav'n ally'd,  
But your great Lord, the Devil, taught you Pride,  
He too, an Angel, 'till he durst rebel,  
And you are, sure, the Stars that with him fell.  
Weep on! a Stock of Tears, like Vows, you have,  
And always ready when you would deceive.*  
Otway's Don Carlos.

Another says,

*—Thy All is but a Shew,  
Rather than solid Virtue; all but a Rib,  
Crooked by Nature.---- Oh! why did God,  
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven  
With Spirits masculine, create at last  
This Novelty on Earth, this fair Defect  
Of Nature, and not fill the World at once  
With Men, as Angels without Feminine,  
Or find some other way to generate  
Mankind?----* Milton.

And a third,

*Ab Traitors! Ab ingrate! Ab faithless Mind!  
Ab Sex, invented first to damn Mankind!  
Nature took care to dress you up for Sin;  
Adorn'd without, unfinish'd left within:  
Hence by no Judgment you your Love direct;  
Talk much, ne'er think, and still the Wrong affect.  
So much Self-love in your Composure's mix'd,  
That Love to others still remains unfix'd;  
Greatness, and Noise, and Shew are your Delight,  
Yet wise Men love you in their own despite:  
And, finding in their native Wit no Ease,  
Are forc'd to put your Folly on to please.*  
Dryden's Aurengzebe.  
I shall

I shall conclude poetical Testimonies to our Disadvantage, with one Quotation more.

——— *Intolerable Vanity! your Sex  
Was never in the right: You're always false,  
Or silly; ev'n your Dresses are not more  
Fantastick than your Appetites: You think  
Of nothing twice: Opinion you have none:  
To-day you're nice, to-morrow not so free;  
Now smile, then frown, now sorrowful, then glad,  
Now pleas'd, now not, and all you know not why.  
Virtue you affect; Inconstancy you practise:  
And when your loose Desires once get Dominion,  
No hungry Churl feeds coarser at a Feast:  
Every rank Fool goes down.      Otway's Orphan.*

It may be said for these Writings, that there is something perhaps in the Character of those that speak, which would circumstantiate the Thing, so as not to make it a Reproach upon Women, as such. But to this it may be easily and justly answered, That if the Author had right Sentiments of Women in general, he might more emphatically aggravate an ill Character, by Comparison of an ill to an innocent and virtuous one, than by general Calumnies without Exception.

But I leave Authors, who are so mean as to desire to please by falling in with corrupt Imaginations, rather than affect a just tho' less extensive Esteem by labouring to rectify our Affections by Reason; of which number are the greater Part of those who have succeeded either in Verse or Prose on the Stage.

When I apply myself to my *French* Reading, I find Women are still worse in proportion to the greater Warmth of the Climate; and according to the Descriptions of us in the Wits of that Nation, tho' they write in cool thought, and in Prose, by way of plain Opinion, we are made up of Affectation, Coquetry, Falshood, Disguise, Treachery, Wantonness, and Perfidiousness.

ousness. All our Merit is to be less guilty one than another under one of these Heads.

Dissertations for the Conduct of Life are as gravely composed upon these Topicks, as if they were as infallible as mathematical Truths. It cost me a great deal of Pains to study by what Means I should refute such scandalous Intimations against my very Nature. But the more I reflected upon those Abuses, I grew the less concern'd to answer them, and finally resolved upon this.

They are perhaps in the right who speak this of mere Women; and it is the Business of ingenious debauch'd Men, who regard us only as such, to give us those Ideas of ourselves, that we may become their more easy Prey.

I believed it, therefore, the safest and surest Method of gainsaying such light Accounts of our Sex to think them a Truth, 'till I had arrived, by the perusal of more solid Authors, to a Constancy of Mind and settled Opinion of Persons and Things, which should place me above being pleased or dissatisfy'd with Praise or Dispraise, upon account of Beauty or Deformity, or any other Advantages or Disadvantages, but what flowed from the Habits and Dispositions of my Soul.

I resolve, therefore, to confine my little Studies, which are to lead to the Conduct of my Life, to the Writings of the most eminent of our Divines; and from thence, as I have heard young Students do in the study of a Science, make for my own private Use a Common-Place, that may direct me in all the Relations of Life, that do now, or possibly may, concern me as a Woman.



EMPLOY-



## EMPLOYMENT.



**I**DLENESSE is not only the Road to all *Sin*, but is a *damnable Sin* itself, quite opposite to the great Ends of the *Creator*, both in our *Creation* and *Redemption*. Can we imagine that *God*, who made nothing but for some excellent End, should make Man for no End at all, or for a very silly one? The *Soul* is a lively active Principle, and for what was Reason given us, but to enable us to do good? This is the truest and most natural Pleasure of a *rational Soul*, which would always be in Action, and should always have Virtue for its Object. Does it consist with infinite Wisdom to endow us with so noble Qualities, that we might trifle them away in Vanity and Impertinence? And if we consider the Vice of Idleness, with respect to our *Redemption*; Did not our *Redeemer*, give himself for us, to *purify to himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works*? How can an unactive useless Life answer the Expectation of our Saviour? Where will that Zeal appear in Idleness? How dull and impure will be its Flame? What is more busy than the Mind of a wicked Man? How is it in the Pursuits of Pleasure? How patient under Difficulties? How insensible of Pain? And shall we not be as active, as lively, in the Pursuits of Virtue? A barren Life is a miserable Return to the Sacrifice of the fruitful Blood of Christ. It disappoints all the Purposes of his Word, which every where condemns the Sin of Idleness;

ness: It was one of those, and not the least, that drew down the Wrath of Heaven on *Sodom* in a Shower of Fire. To what does the *barren Fig-tree* allude, but to the Destruction and Damnation of the Lazy and Idle? Why perish'd the unprofitable Servant, but because he had not improv'd his *Talent*? Many are the Declarations in Scripture against the Sluggish and Disorderly. The Son of God was an Example of active Virtue as well as Innocence, and did not only refrain from doing Evil, *but he went about doing Good*. We are not only forbidden the *Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit*, we are commanded *the perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*; when we are prohibited *to do Evil*, we are at the same time enjoin'd to *learn to do well*. Can the Imagination of Man form a stronger Image of a Life of Action, than by comparing it to a *Race*? And how can he hope to *finish his Course* with Glory, that lags and presses not forward to obtain the Prize? There is not one Christian Virtue to which the Vice of Idleness is not entirely contrary; Faith, Hope, Charity, Fear, Vigilance, and Mortification, are inconsistent with it; and the Consequence is, that it must be a damning Sin. All those Virtues animate and invigorate the Mind; whereas Idleness enfeebles and fetters it. Pure, strict, and severe are those Principles, Idleness is soft and indulgent; they raise and exalt the Soul, this debases and depresses it. And tho' it has great Pretences to Innocence and Merit, its Beginning is in Sin, and its End in Infamy and Perdition. Stupidity, Ignorance, Levity and Sensuality, are its Companions, and harmless and simple as it appears, 'tis of all Vices the most pernicious and dangerous.

There is hardly a Sin that can be charg'd with so many tragical Effects as *Idleness*. It is the Mother of *Disgrace* and *Poverty*; yet it deceives itself with a vain Conceit of *Innocence*, and is so foolish as to hope that it may be happy without labouring, or even desiring to be so. But granting it were as inoffensive as it would seem to be, that it is *negatively* good; let us consider  
the

the sad state of this *negative Goodness*. It robs Religion and the World of the Service due to both; it bereaves us of the *Pleasures of Life* and the *Comforts of Death*. Can *Idleness* maintain the Order and Beauty of human Society? Does it possess any of the Virtues that vindicate the Honour of Religion and demonstrate its *Divinity*? Is it productive of those bright Examples that strike Faith into Infidels, and inflame those that believe with a generous Emulation? *Pleasure of Life*, if true, must be pure and spiritual, and can it be drawn from such a stagnated Pool, as that of *Idleness*? Virtue is a clear and flowing Stream, 'tis the standing Water, that contracts Filth, and the Mind of the lazy Man like the Bottom of a Lake is all Mire and Impurity. He is the same with respect to both *Moral* and *Christian* Virtue. What Hope of Happiness, what Thirst of Glory is he fir'd by? How flames his Devotion, how shines his Charity, what a Stranger is he to all great and good Actions, and how can his Life therefore be *pleasant*, or his Death be *comfortable*? As to the *Comforts of Death*, what a horrible *Desert* must *Eternity* be to a Mind that has been ever wandering in a *vast Solitude*? If life has not been enlighten'd by good Works, how dark and gloomy will Death look, when Conscience summons the dying Wretch to account, and he has nothing but a Blank to produce? How will he discharge the Debt he owes to his Maker, when the Fruits of many idle Years will be demanded, and nothing is to be found but Fancy and Fortune, Humour and Indulgence? How will the Soul shrink, faint, and tremble? What Horror and Confusion will seize on all its Faculties, when it considers that at the dreadful Tribunal, before which he is going to appear, every Man will be judg'd according to his Works? What then will become of him, who has none? If immortal Glory be the Reward of *well-doing*, what will be the Fate of the *Sluggard*, who has loiter'd and slept away that precious Time, which the God of it, his Judge, had given him to improve?

The Guilt of this Vice might be aggravated by enumerating the Talents it wastes, the Obligations it slights, and the Hopes it forfeits. 'Tis indeed a general one; but that, instead of rendering it familiar to us, should alarm us the more, for fear of yielding to the Strength of the Temptation: We are apt to flatter ourselves that there is some secret Charm in it; but it consists only in that we will not be at the pains to break it. It is an old Cheat that has impos'd on Mankind from the Beginning of the World, and will continue to do so to the End of it. *Listlessness* will ever be mistaken for *Simplicity*, and *Indifference* for *Innocence*. As long as the Path to Heaven is a strait one, and there is the least Pain in Virtue, the Idle will ever mistake the Shadow for the Substance, and be contented with it to their Destruction.

Men of *Fortune* may flatter themselves that they are not concern'd in the Lessons which are given against this Vice. Their *Subsistence* does not depend on their *Industry*. They are Masters of their Time, and it always sticks upon their Hands; but should they not consider, that the more they have of it, the more ought they to devote to Religion? *To whom much is given, of him much is required*. Such a one has no Excuse for neglecting the Worship of God, either in publick or private: Or if he has an Excuse, it must be *Pleasure* or *Laziness*, which alike increases his Guilt. The Blessings he enjoys require a frequent and grateful Acknowledgment to the bountiful Giver of them. What more noble Part of Life is there, what more transporting Act of Devotion, than the Praise of the Omnipotent, to whom we owe our present Happiness, and all our Hopes of future? The Great whose good or ill Example is of such vast Importance to the Service or Disservice of Religion, cannot better improve that Leisure which an easy and affluent Fortune gives them, than in divine Meditation, in Prayer, in Reading, and Instruction, having Opportunities to perform all those  
Duties

Duties with more Zeal and Solemnity, than those, the Necessity of whose Affairs keeps them in a continual Hurry.

And the better to dispose them for this, they ought to be careful in the Choice of their Friends. Time may as well be gain'd as lost by Conversation. The Discourses and Reflexions of our Acquaintance may awaken us when we are drowsy, and relieve us when we forget ourselves in the Discharge of our Duty. Nothing can be of greater Use to us in a virtuous Life, than the Society of good Men, whose Discourse is season'd with Religion and Virtue. On the contrary, how mischievous is that Company whose Conversation turns all on Levity and Wantonness. Gay, perhaps, in Appearance, but when examin'd 'tis found only Froth and Impertinence. Civility and good Manners, do not oblige us to be *Fools*, and 'tis the highest Folly to be fond of Society where we cannot maintain our Innocence, and where the Joy and Mirth, which charm us, corrupt our Minds, and fill 'em with either Lightness or Impurity.

'Tis a great Misfortune that Persons of Condition are no better instructed by their Tutors in useful Knowledge, that they might know how to amuse and divert themselves innocently, and find *Employment* for those Hours, which otherwise lay heavy on their Hands. But sure the Greatest need not complain for want of *Employment*. How many are the Virtues, how many the Duties to which a Christian is obliged? How many excellent Qualities are necessary to render a Gentleman worthy the Station where God has placed him? let him but make use of those Qualities, and attend those Duties; let him consider what is requisite to make a good Master, a good Husband, a good Father, a good Son, a good Neighbour, a good Subject, and a good Friend; let him lay out all his Leisure in endeavouring to answer all those Relations as he ought, and then see, if there's any Part of his Time in which he cannot use-

fully and pleasantly employ himself. He who has arriv'd to the highest Degree of Perfection in the Discharge of all the Duties of Life, will at last be found wanting in many. Some he will have omitted, and perform'd others with less Care and Diligence than he ought. Who therefore can complain of want of Business? He that has a just Idea of his Duty, will rather think his Life too short, and his Work too great. For let us be as diligent as we can, let us be as frugal of our Time as we will, we arrive much sooner at a Maturity of Years, than of Knowledge and Virtue.

People of Rank and Wealth should, in all their Diversions, consider what becomes the Character of a Gentleman, and the Dignity of a Christian. He errs in both, whenever he is mean or vicious in any of his Actions. Strange are the Notions of Honour by which some Men are mis-led; they make no Scruple of corrupting another Man's Wife or Daughter, of defrauding the honest Tradesman and Artificer; but they must by no means bear with the Sallies of another Man's Passion, nor have any Command of their own; they every Minute affront their Creator, in profaning his holy Name, and disobeying his Laws: But they cannot live if they are themselves affronted, and Murder is so far from being a Sin with them, that it never gives their Consciences the least Disquiet. Were they as jealous of God's Honour as they pretend to be of their own, they would soon see the Folly and Madness of their wild Pursuits of Revenge, and learn to forgive, as they expect to be forgiven.

If we carry our Reflexions on the good *Employment* of *Time* to the lower Order of Men, such as are engag'd in any *Trade* or *Profession*, we shall find room enough to condemn those for mispending it, who have so little to spare. The Crime is highly aggravated in those whose Idleness ruins them, as well in this World as the next. Their Sin is the greater, as their Temptation is the less: That Time that is given up entirely to  
worldly

worldly Gain, cannot surely be said to be well spent by a Christian whose greatest Gain is Godliness; but he that is negligent in his temporal Affairs, will certainly neglect his spiritual. There's the less to be said on this Subject; for that Avarice in a great measure hinders the Infection of Idleness from spreading among Men of meaner Condition, who too often suffer the Cares of this Life to thrust out those of another, and they are then truly idle and slothful Servants to God, how industrious and faithful soever they are to the World. *Time* is but wasted and mispent, if it makes not Provision for *Eternity*; and it matters little whether it be used in *Pleasure*, or in *Drudgery*.

The Ladies are apt to think that the Softness of their Sex excuses their Idleness, and a Woman who can do nothing, imagines therefore that she has nothing to do.

Is it not shameful to see how Women of *Wit* and *Po-liteness* neglect the common Rudiments of Education? 'Tis enough for them to understand what they *read*, if they do not know how to *pronounce* it, and *read* with a Grace. The more trivial these Faults appear, the greater Shame for such as cannot correct them; and how can they without blushing be in Company guilty of Errors, which they ought not to have brought out of their Nursery? They should not read with a *Tone*, nor hesitate in reading; they should go on smoothly, and with a plain, natural, and uniform Pronunciation. Their Deficiencies in Spelling are become so fashionable, that to spell well, is, among the fair Sex, reckon'd a Sort of Pedantry; they are taught a little more care in writing a good Hand, but that care goes no farther than the making their Letters; the connexing them, and an orderly placing their Words in straight Lines, is what they are, for the most part, utterly Strangers to.

They will find no manner of Inconvenience in acquainting themselves a little with the Grammar of their native Language; not to learn it tediously by Rule, as Boys do *Latin*, but so as that they may be able to express

press themselves properly, and to explain their Thoughts with Clearness and Brevity. 'Tis well known, that in old *Rome*, *Sempronia*, the Mother of the *Gracchi*, contributed very much to the forming of the Eloquence of her Sons, who became afterwards so great Men.

If the Ladies understood *Arithmetick* better, perhaps the keeping Family Accounts would not be such a Piece of ill Breeding. The Convenience and Advantage of having the *Mistress* of the House, the *Steward*, shou'd, methinks, make their learning the four first great Rules of *Arithmetick*, be thought more necessary than it is at present. Let none think themselves above such Business. An illustrious Lady, now a *Dowager*, did not only help her Lord in examining Bills, and stating Accounts, but even in writing his Letters and drawing his Covenants, tho' his Fortune was so large, that it might well have excus'd the keeping more Stewards than one. Such an Employment as this may at first seem too troublesome; but if the Ladies were by their Education prepar'd for it, and us'd to it from their Childhood, the Trouble of it would be little, the most intricate Accounts being made familiar to them, wou'd lose the Terror which their seeming Difficulty raises in the ignorant; and the Pleasure of reducing Things from Confusion to Order by the power of Numbers would be the greater for the Advantage which would accrue to them by their Exactness.

The very Name of the *Law* is frightful to the most of the *weaker* Sex, who are used to depend entirely on the Protection of the *stronger*. It would be well however, if they knew something of the common Rules of *Right*, the Difference between a *Will* and *Deed of Gift*, what a *Contract* is, what a *Partition of Coheirs*, what a *Legacy*, a *Bond*, or the like, and by what *Laws* they are in force; what *Property* is, what a *personal*, and what a *real* Estate; for tho' they may not trust to their own Judgment in Matters of such weight, yet it will direct them in the Use of that of others, either in a single or

a married Life. Those of them, who out of a vexatious Humour are for flying to the *Law* upon all Occasions, or rather upon no Occasion at all, are not by this encourag'd to indulge themselves in so expensive a Folly, which a great Comick Poet has so happily expos'd in the Character of the Widow *Blackacre*. But because that litigious Widow knew too much Law it does not follow that the rest of the Sex should know none at all. What Knowledge is there, that may not be, that is not abus'd? And when the Ladies are advis'd to acquaint themselves with so much of the Law as may help 'em to demand or defend their Right, it is not meant that they should think it is to be got nowhere but in a Court of Justice; that they should fly all Terms of *Peace* and *Arbitrement*, and put themselves immediately into the Hands of Attorneys and Solicitors. They should only so far inform themselves in these Matters, that they may know what is their due, and not lose it for want of claiming; which may very well happen by the profound Ignorance that Women are bred in of things of this Nature.

'Tis very necessary that Women of Quality, and of Estates, should know exactly what those Estates are; what part in Land, what in Houses, what in Money, where and in whose Hands: They should be as well acquainted with the *Rentals* of their Lands, the Draughts of them, the Situation, Leases, and Condition of their Houses, as their Husbands; what Debts they owe, as well as what are owing to them. By this they regulate their domestick and other Expences, provide for the future Settlement of their Children, and answer the Ends of Marriage, to be Helps to their Husbands in the Discharge of paternal Duties. How far it is convenient for them to understand well the Business of the Kitchen, to be the Physicians and Surgeons of the Village, I shall not meddle with, reckoning such Accomplishments as casual only, and not of absolute Necessity to the forming a compleat Gentle-

Gentlewoman, which the other Qualities are, and none more so than a good Taste of Books.

In order to which, young Ladies should be encourag'd to read the *Greek* and *Roman* Histories in the best Translations; they will find in them wonderful Instances of Courage, Faithfulness, Generosity, and a great Contempt of their own *private* Advantage when the *publick* Good was in question, Neither should they be ignorant of the History of *Britain*, which furnishes them with many Examples of brave Actions, hardly exceeded by any thing in Antiquity. Among their own Sex too, they will in both meet with illustrious Patterns of Virtue, which will make the stronger Impressions on their Minds. The *Histories* of other *Nations*, Accounts of *Voyages* and *Travels*, the *Lives* of *Heroes* and *Philosophers*, will be both a pleasant and instructive Entertainment. The reading the best Authors on these Subjects, will enlarge and elevate their Souls, and give them a Contempt for the common Amusements of the Sex. Let them in their reading avoid Vanity and Affectation; but let them not have so mean an Opinion of themselves as to think they are incapable of improving by it; nor of Books, as to think they are incapable of improving by them; there's no Lady, let the Measure of her Understanding be what it will, but may benefit by them; it will add a Lustre to her other shining Qualities, and help to supply the place of 'em where such Qualities are wanting. The Fair may be supportable without them, but with them they are admirable. Naked Reason could never discover many things, which we acquire the Knowledge of by Reading. It gives Solidity to our Thoughts, Sweetness to our Discourse, and finishes what Nature began. Good Wit, without Study, is like a good Face without Ornament. The brighter the Genius, the more worthy is it of Improvement, as well as the more capable.

To Reading must be added Conversation, which are together absolutely necessary to form a sound Understanding,

standing, and agreeable Temper. No Reading better qualifies a Person to converse well in the World than that of *History*, which is here especially recommended, because most of the other Parts of Learning are clogg'd with Terms that are not easily intelligible. Reason speaks all Languages, and there is no part of Learning but may be express'd in *English*, as well as in *Greek* or *Latin*. 'Tis an affected piece of Pedantry in Men of certain learned Professions to hide their Arts with a peculiar *Jargon*, as if Clearness rendred them less venerable, and Darkness added to their Lustre and Ornament. While Custom makes this Practice common to them, let the Ladies despise those Arts which have no Complacency for the Deficiencies of their Education, and take Pleasure and Profit in such as freely lay open all their Stores to them, as do *History*, *Poetry*, and *Eloquence*. The Ladies may be also enlighten'd by *moral Philosophy*, which is said to give Hands to *Reason* as well as a *Mouth*. Are not they equally concern'd with the other Sex in the Divine Lectures we are taught by it, upon the *Chief Good*, upon the *Principle of human Actions*, upon the *Nature and Springs of Virtue and Vice*, and upon the *Passions*? Which in the best Authors are not wrapt up in mystical Phrases, as were the *Oracles* of old, but deliver'd in plain and easy Language, in our Tongue, either Original or Translations.

*Languages* are an Accomplishment, without which it is hardly possible for a Lady to be well bred. I do not see the Necessity of a Woman's learning the *ancient* Tongues, but there are so many polite Authors in *French* and *Italian*, that it is pity the Ladies should not have the *Profit* and *Pleasure* of them. To learn enough only of a Language, as enables 'em to carry on a trifling Conversation, will rather teach them Impertinence than Politeness; but to be able to read *Voiture*, *Racine*, and *Boileau*, or rather *Paschal*, among the *French*; *Tasso* and *Guarini* among the *Italians*, will certainly refine their *Taste*, and add that *Variety* to their  
Studies,

Studies, which will very much contribute to *the Delight* of them. If a Lady knew a little *Latin*, she would find no manner of Inconvenience in it, not so much to improve herself in that *Language* as to help her in her own. The main thing is to put good Books into her Hands, wherein she may find so much Benefit as compensates for the Loss of that Time, which otherwise will be wasted in the Study of her own Tongue as well as others. It is not so strange as some may imagine it, that Improvement in *English* should be recommended. Our Native Language will not come to us by Inspiration, and we shall write and speak with Rudeness or Affectation, if we know no more of it than we are bred with. 'Twas a Saying of a great Father of our Church, eminent above any in the learned World, to a Gentleman who had made him a Compliment on his general Knowledge of Tongues, *That indeed he knew enough of other Languages, and would spend the rest of his time in learning English*, which he wrote with as much Force and Eloquence as any one. Let not the Ladies then despise the Study of a Tongue which Nature has given 'em, and with it a Talent of speaking and writing it, with more Grace than even the Men themselves. *La Bruyere* observes, that their Conversation is one of the best Methods to make Men *polite*, and that, methinks, should incline them to give it as many Advantages as they can; of which, to speak politely is not the least. Tho' this is often acquir'd by those Ladies that know no Tongue but their Native, yet those surely will have it in greater Perfection, who know the Beauties of other Languages, and how to make use of them in their natural one. The galant Writers have distinguish'd themselves as much as any by their Politeness. The Poison in them is conceal'd as much as possible, and 'tis insensibly that they would lead the Heart to Love: Let them therefore be avoided with Care; for there are elegant Writers enough on Moral and Divine Subjects, and the Danger of reading soft  
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and wanton Writings, which warm and corrupt the Imagination, is so great, that one cannot be too careful in the Choice of our Author. Too much of this will be found among the Works of *Poetry* and *Eloquence*, with which none but Ladies of good Taste and solid Judgment should be trusted.

The like Cautions are necessary with respect to *Musick* and *Painting*; the Fancy is often too quick in them, and the Soul too much affected by the Senses. Musick especially so softens, that it enervates it, and exposes it to be conquer'd by the first Temptation which invades it. The Ancients were so well convinc'd of its Perniciousness, that they would never suffer it in a well-regulated State. Why are languishing Airs pleasant, but because the Soul gives itself to the Charms of the Senses? What is it you mean by Transporting or Moving in Musick, but the Fury or the Softness of Desire? If the wise Magistrate of *Sparta* broke all the musical Instruments, whose Harmony was too delicious and melting, and *Plato* rejected all the softer Airs of the *Asiatick* Musick; what should we Christians do with the *Italian*, as moving as any that ever were known to Antiquity? How can chaste Minds delight in the Languishments of wanton Poetry, made yet more languishing by the Graces of Musick? What great or noble is there in the dying Notes of foreign Strumpets and Eunuchs? The Power of Musick never appear'd more in *England* than it has done of late; we have seen it draw after it numerous Audiences of both Sexes at a very extravagant Expence, who knowing nothing of the Language were bewitched only with the Magick of the Sounds. Was it either Vanity or Pleasure? or if either, was it not alike criminal? Should Christians squander away so many precious Hours in *Vanity*, or take *Pleasure* in gratifying a *Sense* that has so often been a *Traitor* to *Virtue*?

Not that all *Poetry* and *Musick* is of the same dangerous Nature. Retrench from them whatever tends

not

not to the true End, and they may be very usefully employ'd to excite in the Soul lively and sublime Notions of God and Religion. As for Poetry, many Parts of the Holy Scriptures are Poems, and were sung by the *Hebrews*. The first Precepts of Morality were deliver'd in Verse, and the singing the Praise of God was the most ancient Worship among Men. Our Church has carefully provided for the Refreshment of the Souls of her Children; the Musick of our Choirs give us a ravishing, tho' a faint Idea, of the happy Choirs in Heaven. For this Reason ought not these Arts, consecrated by the Spirit of God, to be condemn'd. If a Christian *Turn* was given to *Musick* and *Poetry*, it would be the greatest of all Helps to disrelish profane Pleasures. Those Ladies that are sensible of the Impressions made by these two Arts, should early be directed to put them to Divine Uses. And such as have Genius's and Voices may innocently and usefully indulge themselves in them, if they find their Souls rais'd by it in Devotion, and their Passions are free from those irregular Emotions which are the Effects of all Pleasures that owe their Birth to the Senses. If young Gentlemen are forbidden Poetry and Musick, it will only increase their Curiosity, and make 'em fancy there's more in them than they will find upon the Experiment. If they have no *Taste* nor *Genius*, which are Blessings that every one is not endow'd with, without Genius and Taste they will soon be weary of them: Wherefore the best way is to humour their Inclinations, and take care that what Talents they have, may rather serve to improve than to injure their Virtue. The less is to be said of *Painting*, for that few have a Genius for it, and those that have none, would reckon it ridiculous to have Advice given them about a thing they despise. All these Arts, Poetry, Musick, and Painting, are proper Entertainments only for Women of Quality; not for such as the Duties of their Families, and what they owe to Heaven, would wholly employ.

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The common Education of young Gentlewomen at Boarding-Schools is render'd useless, and indeed pernicious. Whole Years are spent in teaching a tasteless Girl to paint on *Glass*, and such sort of useless Knowledge, which should be employed in forming their Minds to Virtue, and the moral Duties of Life. To *draw*, or to know something of *Design*, will be useful in several Works that pass thro' the Hands of those Ladies, who do not take *Idleness* to be the greatest Privilege of their *Sex* and *Quality*. For want of knowing the Rules of *Drawing*, do we meet with so many extravagant Figures in Laces, Linen, Stuffs, and Embroideries. Every thing is ill design'd and confus'd, without Art, without Proportion. These pass for *fine*, because they cost a great deal of Labour; their Lustre dazzles those that see them afar off, or do not understand them. However the Ladies have their Rules which they will not depart from, as irregular as they are: Custom has so habituated them to 'em, that they reckon nothing more fantastical than to dispute them. The Principles of Painting, if known to them, would make them look with Contempt on things they otherwise set the highest Value upon. This Knowledge would lessen the Labour and the Expence of their Works, and give them that Variety and Beauty, that Regularity and Grace, which can only set a Price upon them.

In whatever innocent Employments they spend their Time, certain it is, that 'tis their Duty to employ it about something, and that *Idleness* is a Vice as well in Women as in Men. The Primitive Christians of the highest Quality wrought with their own Hands. The very Apostles themselves, and the Saviour of the World, did the same: They did not work to pass away their Time only, they made of Labour a serious, a continued, and a profitable Employment. *Augustus* wore no Clothes but what were wrought and made by his Wife *Livia*, and his Daughters; and a greater than *Livia*, because a Christian, and more virtuous, our late

late Sovereign Queen *Mary*, of blessed Memory, was always employing her leisure Hours in some Handiwork of Use and Convenience. She had an Abhorrence for the *Idle*, and suffer'd none of her Ladies to be so in her Presence. She knew and practis'd the Duty of Industry, knowing that Labour is a great Guard to Innocence. For the Mind will be busy, and if the Hands do not take off the Head and Heart from wandering, they will sometimes forget their Duty; and having not good Matter to act upon, will be busied in that which is ill. When it wants necessary and useful, it strives by all means to amuse itself with needless and useless things. This, as it is the most dangerous, so it is the most ordinary Cheat of the Enemy; he takes from us the Occasions of employing our Time, by presenting us Ways of losing it.

*Idleness* has two constant Companions, *Irresolution* and *Inconstancy*. The Ladies who are infected with this Vice, no sooner have a *Design*, but they presently change it: They lay, indeed, a great many Foundations, but they never finish the Building; they do not say *I will*, but *I am inclin'd to will* so or so; not *this I desire*, but *this I could desire*: They deliberate, but they never resolve; their Motion is not progressive, but circular; they advance no more than the Person who walks in a Labyrinth. And how should there be any *Progress* in the Labours of those that have no Aim, and propose nothing but to spend Time: They care not what becomes of it, so they can but get rid of it. Some perhaps work a little to pass it away, as they call it, and to divert themselves; they overturn thus the Order of Nature, by which they are to rest a little, that they may work much; they, on the contrary, are for taking much Rest, that they may work a little. Religion speaks after a quite another manner than these Ladies seem to understand: It does not, 'tis true, forbid us to use *Recreation*, but it requires that it should not be excessive. Whether God treats

us as Mercenaries, or as Children, still he enjoins us to work, seeing he himself works always. We have to animate us both his Precept and his Example. It is herein that we imitate him as a Father, when we serve him as a Master. None are dispensed with from this Law, either upon the Advantages of Nature or of Fortune. To work is a hard Word with fine Ladies; their delicate Fingers make it grate to their Ears; and they can't imagine any Obligation lies upon them to do any thing, who have so many to do every thing for them. Their Pleasure they take to be their Business, and look upon themselves as not bound by those sacred Laws which bind the rest of Mankind; with such, *good* Counsel will be reckon'd *ill* Manners, and one cannot hope that Human Advice will have any Influence where Divine Command has none.

How far might our Reflexions run, on the good Employment of Time in both Sexes, and on the Helps we may have in it.

He that is choice of his Time will also be choice of his Company and his Actions, that there be nothing vain in the one, nor criminal in the other. God has given us a short Time upon Earth, and yet upon this short Time depends Eternity. There's not an Hour of our Lives (when we are of Years to distinguish Good from Evil) but we must account for to God who gave it to us. If every *Idle Word* will be put to our Reckoning, what will every *Idle Day*? Many Enemies have we to conquer, many Evils to prevent, much Danger to run through, many Difficulties to overcome, many Necessities to serve, and much Good to do; where then is the Leisure that is so burdensome to Persons of all Conditions? Nor were we born for ourselves only; our Children, our Relations, our Friends, our Neighbours, our Prince, our Country, demand their several Duties of us, after we have discharged what are owing to ourselves. There is no Station of Life but a Man may serve God in. All Business

business that is necessary, charitable or profitable, in order to any of those Ends, which we are bound to answer, is the doing God's Work, who has given the good things of the World to serve the Needs of Nature, by the Toil of the Ploughman, the Skill of the Artificer, and the Traffick of the Merchant: These Men are the Ministers of Divine Providence, and the Stewards of the Creation: Thus a King, a Judge, a Priest, a Lawyer, a Physician, doing the Work of their Offices, according to their proper Rules, are doing the Work of God, in serving those Necessities which God has made, and made no Provision for them but by their Ministry. No Man can complain that his Profession takes him off from Religion; his Profession itself is God's Service, and if it be moderately pursu'd, and according to the Rules of Christian Prudence, it will leave void Spaces enough for publick and private Devotions.

Who is it that can pretend to be *idle* for want of having something to do? Who is there that can say he has no Leisure for Prayer and Meditation? He that has the most Business may so order it, that he shall serve God in his very Business, and find vacant Hours for Divine Worship.

What surer Remedy is there against Wantonness, Softness and Effeminacy, than Labour and Industry? To the *Laborious* there is scarce any Passage open for the Enemy, Temptation is forced to steal upon them; but it comes upon the Idle barefaced, and with the Impudence of a restless Importunity.

Idleness is the *Burial of a living Man*? an idle Person being so useless to any Purposes of God and Man that like one that is dead he is unconcern'd in the Changes and Necessities of the World, and lives only to waste his Time and eat the Fruits of the Earth; like a Vermin or a Wolf, when their Time comes they die and perish, and in the mean while do no Good; they neither plough, nor carry Burdens; all they do is either unprofitable or mischievous.

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There is no greater Prodigal than the lazy Man ; he throws away that which is invaluable, in respect of its present Use, and irreparable when it is past. No Power of Art or Nature can recover it ; wherefore it must be the greatest Folly imaginable not to improve it to our utmost ; to help us in which, we may observe and practise the following *Rules*,

Let us accustom ourselves when we awake in the Morning *to think first upon God* ; let our last Thoughts at Night be the same, and what we may do for his Service. Let us sleep away no more of our precious Time than is necessary for our Health. The Glory of the Morning Sun is sufficient to invite the Sluggard from his Down, did not his Duty summon him to leave it.

Whatever our Professions are, we should be diligent in them, and give none of those Hours to Idleness or Diversion, which Prudence and good Husbandry dedicate to them.

When we have answered what we owe to the common Cares of Life, in our several Employments, we owe the Intervals of our Time to our Creator. Not that we may not divert ourselves innocently, to refresh the Soul, and make it the livelier in its other Operations. The Delight good Men take in Praying, Reading, and Meditation, is enough of itself to recommend it ; and the Exercise of Works of Charity, Friendliness, and Neighbourhood, is so pleasant to a Human Mind, that like Virtue, 'tis its own Reward. Shall we forget to call upon God to relieve our Necessities, and to praise him for his continued Goodness ? Can we rise, can we lie down, without Raptures of grateful Devotion ?

'Tis Matter of great Lamentation to see how our solemn Fasts and Festivals are loiter'd away, instead of being spent in Prayer and Praises. Better for the Husbandman to follow his Plough, and the Artificer his Trade, than to do nothing, or to do wickedly. Such Days should be devoted to Works of Religion and Charity : instead of which, our Fasts are Festivals, changing  
only

only the Form; and our Festivals, Days of Riot and Debauchery.

Let not the Jollity and gay Humour of *Sots*, dignify'd with the Title of *good Company*, tempt you to waste that Time, of which no Man can be too provident. *Busy Bodies* are almost as Dangerous to it; they squander it in Impertinence. One idle Babler may be the Loss of many Mens Time, and the talkative Fool is not more guilty than the patient. Avoid alike such *Triflers*, and the *Laughers*, that are indebted for their Mirth to the Fumes of Wine; False is that Mirth, and the Wit that makes it. Sobriety restores them to their native Dulness, and they seem not to have any Souls, any longer than they are sodden.

Never make yourself of any Parties to *pass the Time only*; think that a Day well spent may be the Day of your *Salvation*. Is not *Eternity* of Joy worth the Sacrifice of a few Hours? Remember they were given you to make your Peace with the offended Majesty of Heaven to pray for Pardon, and to lay up a Treasure of good Works against the great Day of Account, *for all our Deeds done in the Flesh, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.*

There is no Man so much involv'd in worldly Business, but his Soul, in the greatest Hurry of it, may by an Ejaculation take a Flight to Heaven. Such Starts of Devotion and Piety are a pleasing Offering to God, who would never be forgotten by his Children. Thus may your Time be as truly improv'd by your Trade as by your Worship, and by your own short Prayers, as by the long Offices of those who have no Labour nor useful Employment to fill it up.

In whatever you spend your Leisure or your other Hours, let it be in something reasonable and profitable, suitable to your Years and Capacity; not in Trifles, like Children, or People out of their Wits. For a Man may be idly busy, and the Time he employs in Folly and Vanity is as much wasted, as that which he sleeps

sleeps or whiles away. If it answers no good End, to be *employ'd* is as pernicious as to be *idle*. Suit your Employment to the Dignity of your Person; remember you are a Man, and let your Works answer your Character. Mean or unworthy Employments are the Diseases of Labour, and the Rust of Time, which it contracts not by lying still, but by being employ'd in Filth.

Above all, take care that what you are busied about becomes a Christian, and have no Mixture of Sin in it. He who labours in the Service of Avarice, or ministers to another's Lust, or deals in Impurity and Intemperance, is *idle* in the worst Sense. Every Hour so spent runs him backward, and the remaining and shorter Part of his Life may not be long enough to recover what is thus mis-spent. People of Condition ought to be very curious in what they employ themselves about. Wretched are they if their Education has been so loose, that they know not how to spend their Time to any Purpose; if they are forc'd to throw themselves into Base Company, purely because they cannot tell what to do when they are alone. No Solitude is so frightful as that which leaves such Men with themselves; and nothing so welcome as that which delivers 'em from such Company. They that have Learning know how precious every Hour is, and how to improve it to be useful to themselves and the Publick, in Arts, Counsel, or Arms: They that have none, should in the Choice of their Society observe where they can make most use of others Improvements to those nobler Purposes, and associate with such as will neither tempt them to any Vice, nor join with them in any; as may supply their Defects by Instruction and Example. Such as these may at least acquaint themselves with History, the Laws and Customs of their Country, and their own domestick Affairs: They may learn OEconomy and good Management, Humanity to their Tenants and Neighbours, may

employ themselves in charitable Offices, in reconciling Enemies, and preventing the Mischief of litigious Spirits ; and especially ought they to be well instructed in the Lessons that have been already read to them, to lay out all the Hours they have to spare from Acts of Necessity and Charity, on Religion and Piety.

These Reflexions relate chiefly to Men of Quality, not but they are many of them as useful for Ladies, whose Time shou'd be employed in such Works as seem to be allotted them by God and Nature. To take a Parent's Care in the Education of their Children is of late reckon'd very uncourtly ; as if Quality was above Nature, and Title could discharge the Ladies from the Obligations of the Divine Laws. There was an Age when Women of the best Condition prided themselves in performing Christian Duties, in visiting and assisting the Sick, comforting and relieving the Poor ; but Shew and Vanity usurp now the Places of Reason and Duty. How unmannerly would a tedious Discourse be on their Duties, as Wives, Daughters, Mothers ? Would they forgive the Prelate who shou'd preach to them as one of the Fathers of our Church does : *Be courteous to your Neighbours, learn in Silence of your Husbands and spiritual Guides, read good Books, pray often, and speak little ;* learn to do Works for necessary Uses ; by which, the Reverend Prelate tells us, the sacred Writ intends good *Houswifery* and *Charity* : Virtues that, rare as they are, shine still in some of our noblest Families, brighter even than Nobility itself.

Foppery and Wantonness of Dress are of all things unbecoming a Christian Life ; a worse Employment Men and Women of all Conditions cannot be busy'd about : To indulge the Appetite too much, as it is prejudicial to the *Health* of the Body, so also is it to that of the *Soul* ; not only by taking up too much time in contriving how to regale the *Palate*, but by  
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pampering the Flesh, and preparing it for Temptation. Moderate Food and Apparel distinguish'd the first Christians, who, upon their Conversion, renounc'd, as we all do now by our baptismal Vow, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, the Luxury of *Diet* and *Dress*.

Those that are over-curious, and always enquiring after things which concern them not, unprofitably employ their Time. The bearing and hearing of Tales is often attended with Scandal and Backbitings, Vices for which Christians, who have a new Commandment *to love one another*, should have an Abhorrence. How it has prevail'd lately, we have been sad Witnesses of; Meddlers with other Mens Matters, have infected the World with a malignant Spirit of Slander. So far only should we be concern'd for our Neighbours, as to pity their Distresses, and relieve their Wants. If unnecessary and fantastick Visits are forbidden us under the Vice of Idleness, what will become of great part of the Ladies Time, and how will they account for it? It is now a Piece of good Breeding to ramble three or four Days in a Week from House to House, not in doing good, but in doing nothing, and to sit at Home the rest of it, expecting as great Triflers as themselves. *Dress*, *Meals*, *Visit*, *Park*, *Opera*, and *Play*, take up all the Hours that are not given by them to Sleep; in which, if the Morning is not spent, *Dress* consumes it all: The Noon is not long enough for Dinner, the Afternoon is loiter'd away in the *Park*, and the rest of the Day at the *Theatres*: What part of it can they spare for the Church and the Closet? What part of it do they dedicate to God, who will most surely demand his Share, at the last Judgment, and eternally punish those that have defrauded him of it? Recreations, as has been observ'd, however innocent they are in themselves, become criminal when that Time is mis-spent in them, which should be apply'd to religious or civil Uses; choose

therefore such as are healthy, short, and refreshing. Never make a Business of your Pleasure. He who wastes his Time in *Sports*; and calls it *Recreation*, is like him whose Coat is all made of Fringes, and his Meat nothing but Sauces : They are healthless, expensive, and useless ; none are more so than those that steal your Affections from severer Employments. To what you give your Affections, you will not grudge to give your Time. St. *John* diverted himself with a tame Partridge, but we should not for that reason spend our Time in playing with Lap-dogs, or feeding Canary-birds ; Employments, than which none can be more innocent, if too much Time is not wasted on them ; none more trifling and ridiculous, if it is. The Mind, like a Bow, must not be always bent ; it is lawful and necessary to relax it ; but we must never suffer it to be unready, or unstrung. What has been said of *Prayer* and *Meditation* will instruct us to let nothing but a violent, sudden, and impatient Necessity make us omit, one Day, our Morning and Evening Devotions : Minutes, so employ'd, will help us to spend Hours the more usefully and religiously. If the People wou'd withdraw themselves from Business and Company, to offer up some short *Prayers* or *Ejaculations* to Heaven, they would at their return learn to season them with heavenly things. These transient Devotions are only justifiable in such as are busy'd by the Cares of Life : For God's Work is not to be done negligently and idly ; the Heart must not be set upon the World, when the Hand is lifted in Prayer. Be sure to prefer an Act of Religion, in its Place and proper Season, before all worldly Pleasure. Let Secular things, that may be dispens'd with, wait upon Spiritual. Sir *Thomas More*, Lord High Chancellor of *England*, being sent for by the King when he was at his Prayers in Publick, return'd answer, *He would attend him when he had first perform'd his Service to the King of Kings* : And it did Honour to *Rusticus*, that when Letters from *Cæsar*

*Cæſar* were given him, he refus'd to open them, 'till the Philoſopher had done his Lecture. If that wiſe *Roman* thought ſuch Homage was due to the Diſpenſations of human Wiſdom, how much more is to divine? If to know how to govern ones ſelf in this tranſitory Life be of more Importance than imperial Commands, how important is it for us to do our Work for Eternity?

When the Clock ſtrikes, or however elſe you meaſure the Day, 'tis good every Hour to bleſs it with an Ejaculation, and uſe yourſelf to meaſure your Time by your Devotion, which is the moſt infallible way to improve it: Do this alſo in the Breaches of your Sleep, that thoſe Spaces which have in them no direct Buſineſs of the World, may be fill'd with Religion.

If it has been your Miſfortune to have miſ-ſpent any of your precious Time, make it your firſt Care to redeem it by repenting of what you have loſt, and putting thoſe Parts of it which were waſted on Trivial or Criminal Uſes, to Pious and Religious ones. Give thoſe Hours eſpecially to thoſe Graces, the contrary of which you formerly practis'd. If you have been ſo wicked as to have waſted any in Luxury and Uncleanneſs, dedicate a great Part of your future Life to Actions of Chaſtity and Temperance. Be on the Watch againſt preſent and future Perils; and from time to time look out that you be in no more Danger of falling; this will be to redeem it: And beſides Acts of Religion and Piety, you may buy your Security of it at the Price of any Labour or honeſt Arts. As a part of every Day ſhould be given to God's Service; ſo alſo ſhould a part of every Year; wherein all worldly Buſineſs ſhould be quitted, and that ſolemn Portion of it be ſpent in Faſting and Prayer, Meditation and Attendances upon God; in examining ourſelves, to ſee how we grow in Godlineſs, as we do in Age. Yearly ought we to make up our Accounts with

## 30 • E M P L O Y M E N T.

Heaven ; to renew our Vows, and study to amend whatever has been amiss in the former part of our Lives. In this we shall be much assisted if we examine ourselves daily, and keep our Accounts short. Take a particular Scrutiny of your Actions every Night before you Sleep ; and clear your Conscience by Repentance and Prayer, if you have any thing to charge it with, as the purest Minds will always have. When the Temptations of the Day have been great, by *Feasts, Sports*, and the like, the more strict let your Examination be, the more severe your Penitence, the more firm your Resolutions, with the Divine Grace, to be upon your guard against them for the future. If nothing but common has happen'd, the less need we examine ourselves : But let us never lie down, nor trust our Heads to the Pillow, without such a Recollection, for fear some Sin should be forgotten, and pass by unrepented of, and we should accustom ourselves to run back in our Account so far, 'till we should be afraid to retrospect, and, like Bankrupts, ruin our Souls, because we durst not look into the Book of our Consciences. By running over the Actions of every Day in our Minds at Night, we shall find out Matter of Thanksgiving, as well as Sorrow, and commend ourselves to God in sweet Ecstasies of Praise.

In observing these Rules, for the useful and pious Employment of our Time, let us practise them with Prudence and Moderation, not with Vexation and Scruple. Let us not lay too much stress on our over Diligence, and think no Merit greater than our good Works, who have only the Merits of our Redeemer to rely upon. Civil Employments are good Advantages, but many of the Particulars recommended, not Divine Commandments ; they must therefore be us'd, as shall be found expedient to every one's Condition. For, provided our Duty be secur'd, the Degrees and Instruments of it are permitted to every Man, according to his Station and Circumstances, and the Conduct of  
such

such as are appointed to be his Guides. Happy is he, who can secure every Hour for pious Uses; but the Duty consists not scrupulously in Minutes and Half-hours, nor in greater or less Portions of Time, but in appropriating it all to the Duties that are required of us as Christians and as Men; remembering none of it must be spar'd for Sin, and that without Sin we cannot be idle.

Were there no other Considerations than what relate to this World only, one idle Person would be a *Scandal* and a *Nuisance* to it. From Laziness came Knavery and Theft, *Poverty* and *Beggary*. The Laws of Man as well as God discountenance it in all well-govern'd States. The Publick exacts a part of every Man's Time; and there is not a Man upon Earth of so exalted a Station, that he can say in any one Minute of his Life that he has nothing to do, either for himself or others. In the lower Order of Mankind, Idleness is not sinful but criminal; and the Body as well as the Mind is subject to Correction. As to the other World, these Considerations are of the last Importance on this account only, that the good use of our Time prepares us for all sudden Changes; and we shall not, if we have well improv'd it, be surpris'd at the sudden coming of the Day of our Lord. We shall be ready and willing to render our Accounts of our Actions, because our *Days have not been evil*. Evil indeed are all our Days that have been best employ'd; but the Mercy of God will accept of our Repentance, when we daily beg it of him with Sincerity and Contrition.

Beg God's Blessing, intend his Honour, and willingly submit to his Providence, in complying with the Duty of your Calling; be diligent and careful in it, and endeavour after Perfection. Do not act in it with too much Intenseness; nor discompose nor hurry yourselves so far as to lose the Command of yourselves, and lie open to the Temptations of Avarice and Pride.

When you go from one Business, or one Company to another, consider how you discharg'd yourselves in it, that you may beg pardon for what was amiss ; and having your Consciences clear, may attend what you are going about with the more Ease, Application, and Cheerfulness.

If your Employment admits Conversation, and your Circumstances allow it, why may you not serve both Worlds at once ? While you are working, let your Servants or Children read to you, or repeat what they have learnt from the Scripture and Catechism, or from Books of Morality : Or if this does not suit with your Profession, there are few but may mix profitable Discourses and pious Thoughts with their Labours.

Exact no more Work of any than their Strength and Health enable them to perform ; and take not from them all their Time, who owe a Portion of it to Heaven as well as yourselves. You ought rather to instruct and encourage them in their Devotion, than to interrupt or obstruct it : You may also make yourself accountable for their Sin, of which your Avarice was the occasion.

If you work for others, do it with as much Diligence and Integrity as if it was for yourselves ; remembering that Divine Law, to do in all things with your Neighbour, Friend, or Enemy, as you would be done by. Be exactly faithful in Word and Deed to all, and kind and charitable, according to your Neighbour's Wants, and your own Ability.

In fine, let those who flatter themselves that they are not so much accountable for mis-spent Time, as those that are oblig'd to use it for the Necessities of Life, hear what God said to *Adam* their Father : and then, if they can, prove by what other superior Law they are exempted from that same Doom.

*Because thou hast hearkened unto the Voice of thy Wife, and hast eaten of the Tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it ; cursed is the Ground for thy*

*thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the Days of thy Life. Thorns and Thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat of the Herb of the Field. In the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread, 'till thou return unto the Ground.*

Labour is partly a *Command* and partly a *Punishment*: It was at first the Effect of *Sin* ; 'tis now the Preserver of *Innocence*. There will be no *Labour* in *Heaven* ; but then there will be no *Temptation*. This Life is a State of Trial and Action, of mutual Dependence and Improvement. By Work is the Body supported, and the Mind instructed : God can inform the one and preserve the other, without our Co-operation ; but he has not been pleas'd to give us any Promise so to do : On the contrary he tells us, *In the Sweat of our Face shall we eat our Bread*. And the Highest are subject to his Command, as well as the Lowest ; and no more exempted from *Labour*, than from *Travel* in their bringing forth. Both were the Punishment of our first Parents Disobedience ; and it is the greatest Presumption, to think of altering or not complying with this fundamental Law of the *Creator*. A contemplative Life is the Felicity of separated Spirits ; and that eternal Rest which they enjoy in *Heaven*, the Reward of those that *fight the good Fight upon Earth*. The common Enemy of our Souls will always be tempting us to *Idleness* ; he has us then at the greatest Advantage : 'Tis for this Reason he flatters our *Imagination* with the Charms of Ease, and the Delights of Solitude. When our Thoughts are wandering, as the Soul will be always in motion, 'tis then he surprises us, and masters them. None but our *Saviour* could have resisted him in the *Wilderness* ; and the Example of his being so long tempted there, is given us to shew us, that we are not of ourselves a Match for the Prince of the Power of the Air ; and that 'tis only the *Prerogative* of God to be *Independent*. If we call in the Help of *Labour* and *Devotion*, he will find us too well prepared for his Attacks, and will wait for a more

loose unguarded Hour. There is no *Work* despicable because it is mean; if it is honest and necessary 'tis honourable. I am render'd important to the Creation, by serving to its Necessities. It has been mention'd, that Princesses in old Times did not disdain the *Distaff* and *Needle*. The Golden Age is painted as a Pastoral one, when the Kings of the Earth tilled the Ground, and the Princes kept Sheep. The *Mother of Christ* had a Carpenter to her Husband; and *Turtle-Doves* and *Pigeons* were all the Sacrifice she had to offer at the *Nativity* of our *Redeemer*. What is deserving Contempt which is the Gift of Providence? Whatever my Employment is, let me do it as chearfully and as perfectly as I can, for God's sake, and in a spirit of Obedience; that I may be of the Number of those, to whom it shall be pronounc'd, *Well done ye good and faithful Servants, &c.*

In performing the Duties of Religion and Life, Diligence in both promises us alike with Success; and if my Diligence arises from a pious Principle to please God, and considering that every thing I do is done in his Presence, I shall not only have the *temporal* Reward, but the *eternal*. If we give our Hands to the World, let us keep our Hearts from it. On whatever I am employ'd about, let my Affections be set on things *above*. If, like *Martha*, I am cumbred with *many things*, I would, with *Mary*, be still mindful of the *one thing needful*.

### A P R A Y E R for those that Labour.

**O** Good and gracious God, let not the Cares of this World deaden the Influences of thy holy Spirit. Let my End in all my Actions be the doing of my Duty, and not worldly Profit only. Let no Disorder of my Affections indispose my Mind for Acts of Devotion, be a Temptation to Sin, or cause my overlooking Opportunities of glorifying thee, my Creator, or doing good to my Neighbour. Shall I not sing thy Praises at my Labours, when St. Paul and Silas sang them in Prison: Thou commandest the Israelites to speak of the Law,  
and

*and the great things thou hadst done for them, when they went out, and when they came in. Let that be my Rule, oh my Lord! and let my Children and Servants be taught the excellent Precepts of the Gospel, to declare thy wonderful Love to Man, in thy only Son Christ Jesus. I submit to thy Providence in the Work I am oblig'd to do for my daily Bread. I look up to thee as the Giver of it, and cheerfully make use of the Means of obtaining it. Pardon my want of Knowledge, remove my deadly Ignorance, assist me with thy divine Grace in my humble reading of the Scriptures, and attending the sacred Ordinances. Let me not indulge natural Pride, or Sloth, in learning that which is good. Accept, oh Lord! of the Improvements I make of the Talents thou hast intrusted me with. Give me Uprightness of Heart, and forgive my unwilling Mistakes.*

A PRAYER for the Rich.

*AS thou, oh Lord! hast made me able to give, make me willing, I beseech thee. Let me not waste that Time in Vanity and Wickedness, that ought to be employ'd in thy Service. Since thou hast set my Feet on high, let my Heart be also lifted up, not to despise my Brother, but to glorify thee; and by a higher Prospect, endeavour to guide others in the beautiful Paths of Life and Virtue. Give me the Riches of Grace, and advance me in the School of Wisdom and Knowledge.*

The former Reflexions concern chiefly that part of Life which fits us for another World: The following are intended to fit us more for this, by making us agreeable to ourselves and others.



## WIT *and* DELICACY.

THE Character of *Wit* is alike affected by both Sexes: If *Learning* adorns it in Men, *Beauty* gives it as much grace in Women; and makes it more dangerous to those that possess it. Ladies of a lively active Spirit are very apt to turn it to *Intrigue*, which, perhaps, may begin in *Frolick* only, but too often ends in *Shame*. An affectation of *Wit*, where it is not, serves only to render *Folly* more *ridiculous*; it makes both Men and Women forward in speaking; they fancy they shew their *Wit* when they shew their *Ignorance*, and expose themselves to be the *Jest* of the Company, when they endeavour to be the *Admiration*. This talkative forward Humour sets such as have little *Wit* on a level with those that have none, and spoils *Talents* which are capable of Improvement. Give them a Relish of Delicacy, they will soon be ashamed of that vain Humour, and avoid the Shelves which are so fatal to Impertinence. *Delicacy* is of the *Virgin* Kind, the less it is touch'd the more it is admir'd, and better recommended by Modesty and Silence, than by Airs and turns of Fancy, which seldom do the Business they are designed for, and on the contrary, offend instead of pleasing. A young Lady should never speak, but for Necessity, and even then with Diffidence and Deference. She should never talk of things above the common reach of her Age and Sex, however she may be inform'd of them by the Advantages of her Quality and Education. Let her not be tempted into this Error by a happy Memory, by a quick and pleasant Imagination, by a Fluency of Speech,

Speech, or any of those Qualities, which she may enjoy in common with a great Number of other Women, of little Sense otherwise, and in some respects, very contemptible. Her Behaviour should be exact and regular, her Temper even and orderly, her Judgment just and upright, to know when to talk and when to be silent; and if in all her Conduct there appears more *Discretion* than *Humour*, her other Qualities will shine the brighter, and distinguish her from the rest of her Sex.

This Prudence is a much more necessary Qualification than what is call'd Wit: It will give her an Air of Authority and Respect, instead of a vain and familiar one. Whatever other Accomplishments she has, will, without this, want their true Ornament, and have no more Value without good Order, than scatter'd Flowers confusedly blown about by the Wind.

There is a sort of Discretion and Prudence by which even the Vicious preserve their Reputation, and for want of which, the most Virtuous lose theirs. The Escapes of little Excursions of Wit are often the Occasion of it. Young Ladies, therefore, must be upon their guard, and not let things slip from their Tongues which ought not to dwell in their Minds. Delicacy of thought will help them to avoid this Wreck; nothing can be delicate that is not true and innocent. Pertness of Fancy and Expression has a false Delicacy, which glares perhaps in Conversation, but never pleases. The surest Sign of want of Wit is a Fondness of shewing it; those that have it are sparing of a Treasure which is so rare and uncommon. True Wisdom is like the Lamps of the ancient Sepulchres, which lasted so long light as they were under ground, and were extinguish'd as soon as they took Air. Wit indeed, if true, shines out, but never but when it is sure of striking, and to have the Effect it intended.

To affect a nice Taste of Things, without Discernment, is like judging of Painting without Sight. The best Taste in the Conduct of Life is the accommodating our-

ourselves to Affairs, according as they are more or less useful. Nothing is really estimable but good Sense and Virtue ; both of which make us look upon Disgust and Niceness, not as laudable Delicacies, but rather as the Weakness of a sick Mind or Body.

Since we are to live in the World with the Dull and Rude, as well as with the Polite and Witty ; since our Affairs will not be always so very delicate ; Reason, the only true Delicacy, bids us to be polite with the Polite, and delicate with the Delicate ; to suit our Behaviour to our Company, and as that is, to be either witty or dull ; if it is in our Power to be either the one or the other. A disgustful Temper makes us uneasy both to ourselves and others. If we distaste every Thing, every Body will distaste us ; and he who imagines that by being *over-nice* he may get the Character of being *wise*, may probably meet with that of being *over-wise*, agreeably to the State of a modern Critick, whose *over-wisdom* and *over-delicacy* have turn'd at last into downright Madness.



## RECREATIONS.

**O**F the two Sexes, the softer one has most need of Advice in the use of their Diversions ; there are more Eyes upon them, from the other to admire and please them, than from their own to observe and censure. Besides the Temptations of their own Hearts, they have those of the Men to struggle with ; and if they shew the least Disposition to Pleasure, they will find enow to encourage them in it. To be eager in the Pursuit of it, while they are young, is dangerous ; to catch at it, when they are old, is catching at a Shadow : When it becomes less natural it grows to be indecent. Diversions are for such as are  
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Opprest by Labour, to ease and relieve them; the Idle want not Relief and Ease, and yet they, above all, are ever crying they want something to divert themselves. 'Tis as necessary as natural, to unbend our Thoughts, when they are too much stretch'd by our Cares; but to turn our whole Lives into a *Holiday*, is ridiculous and absurd, destroying Pleasure instead of promoting it. The Mind like the Body is tir'd in being always in one Posture. The most piquant Sauces wou'd lose their Taste, if we were to be always eating them. Too serious Application of Mind breaks it, too diverting loosens it; Variety gives the Relish. Diversions too frequently repeated become at first indifferent, and at last tedious; when well-chosen and well-tim'd, they are without Blame; when us'd to an Excess their Innocence turns, if not to a Crime, at least to Impertinence. Ladies are now engag'd for *Assemblies, Parties, Visits, and Maskerades*, as *Bessus* was for Duels. They live in a Circle of Idleness, where they turn round for the whole Year, without the Interruption of a serious Hour; they know what Plays are on the Stocks, what Singers are come or coming from *Italy*: No Trooper is more obedient to the Sound of his Captain's Trumpet, than they are to that which summons them to a *Puppet-Show* or a *Monster*. The Spring that brings out Flies and Fools drives them to *Hide-Park*. In Winter they are an Incumbrance to the *Theatres*, and the *Ballad of the Drawing-Room*; the Streets are all this while so weary of these daily Faces, that Mens Eyes are glutted with them; they ride about so long to be gaz'd upon, that at last they are a Surfeit to the Sight, which is glutted with fine things, as the Stomach is with sweet ones. The *Indian*, and other Ladies, who want the Charms of the *English*, excite by Curiosity the Passion they cannot raise by Beauty. But as if ours were always sure of Conquest, they do not consider that by giving too much of themselves to the World, they grow luscious, and rather oppress

oppress than please. These jolly Dames so continually seek Diversion, that in a little Time they grow into a Jest, yet are unwilling to remember that if they were seldomer seen they would not be so often laugh'd at. Who will choose to look on a Face he is sure to see to-morrow, who to-day has a new one to entertain him? The Ladies grow *cheap* by growing familiar, and *cheap* is the unkindest Word that can be bestow'd upon the Sex.

To *game* a little for the Diversion of yourself or your Company, has no Harm in it; but to do it so often as to be call'd a *Gamester* is to be avoided next to things that are criminal. And if Gaming is a Vice in Men, it is much more so in Women; for that one of its Consequences is often the Loss of what is much more valuable than Gold or Diamonds, their Reputation, if not their Honour. It engages both in a Habit of Idleness and ill Hours, draws them into mixt Company, makes them neglect their Civilities abroad, and their Business at home; in a word, the *Gamester*, whether Man or Woman, has neither God, Father, Husband, or Friend; at least they live as if they had neither, and give up to Chance the Empire of Providence.

The Objections are much stronger still to the Ladies than to the Men, with respect to *deep Play*; it gives occasion of the World to ask spiteful Questions: How they dare venture to lose? and what Means they have to pay such great Sums? The Winner and the Loser are alike in Danger: If she wins, it puts her into so good a Humour nothing can put her into an ill one; if she loses, she runs in Debt, and there are more Ways than one to discharge it. The *Debtor* is at the Mercy of the *Creditor*, and exact are both Sexes in paying these *Debts of Honour*. If the Ladies pay in Money, it will be ask'd how they come by it? If they owe, and especially to a Man, he will be thought no unfair Creditor, if, when the Estate fails, he seizes upon the Person. Add to this, if a lovely Woman cou'd see her own Face  
upon

upon an *ill Run*, the sullen Looks, and the Contorsions of Countenance, she would forswear any thing that gives such a Disadvantage to her Beauty.

*Dancing* is not of itself a Fault, but all that shou'd be aim'd at in learning it, is how to move gracefully ; all beyond it may be call'd excelling in a Mistake. A Man or Woman had better never dance, because they have no Skill in it, than dance often because they do it well. The easiest, as well as safest Method of doing it, is in private *Companies*, amongst particular Friends, and then carelessly, like a Diversion, never solemnly like a Business. A Year, or indeed a Month's Converse with a Dancing-Master, would be very ill spent, if one learnt of him to mis-spend the rest of our Time by it. Dancing is a Recreation that contributes to Health of Body, as well as to Deportment, and ceases to be innocent only when we do it not so much for our own sake, as the sake of others. The Effect it has upon the Body and Mind, when us'd to Excess, should frighten us from such Use of it ; so contrary to the Prayer taught us by our Saviour, to be delivered from Temptation, into which we then blindly throw ourselves. The Freedoms familiariz'd by Custom are, what at other Times would shock the Delicacy and Decency of Ladies, who may assure themselves, that no Diversion is warrantable that's shocking either to Decency or Delicacy.

All *Recreations* are design'd to relieve, and not to soften the Mind ; they are no longer lawful than they answer that Design : And it will not be amiss to carry our Reflexion upon Recreations to what is lawful and unlawful in them.

To be lawful, they must be such as have no Sin in them ; by which Dancing and Gaming, last spoken of, are in great Danger of being excluded : They are placed on the very Margin of Virtue, and the least Stumble flings one into the Precipice of Vice. Whatever is dishonourable to God, or injurious to your Neigh-

## 42 RECREATIONS.

Neighbour, cannot be lawful Diversion; and profane and wanton Discourse, Scandal and Slander, are certainly not to be delighted in, or to be any Part of the Employment of our Time. All Recreation must be moderate as well as innocent. Minutes, and not Days or Hours, shou'd only be given to them: For the Purpose of Diversion is not to exempt us from Labour, but to fit us for it. If our Passions are too much affected by our Recreations, if we have them too much at Heart, they are no longer lawful, because they will take off our Minds from our spiritual or temporal Duties; We shall be like School-Boys, who after *Play-time* cannot settle to their Books again. Time, as has been observ'd, is to be redeem'd, and not flung away: And when we consider what a great Work we have here to do, and how uncertain we are how long time we shall have to do it, we should rather seek for Recreation in the sublime Meditations on the wonderful Works of the Almighty, than in the Follies and Trifles of this Transitory Life.

Little need have we to contrive Ways to while away our Time, which flies so fast from us, and returns no more. Remember this, you that loiter away your Days, and revel away your Nights: Remember this, ye Gamesters, by whom Days and Nights are confounded thro' an insatiable Lust of Gain. That Lust, the most extravagant Instance of Avarice, renders it almost impossible to game and not to sin. For if Play be any way lawful, 'tis when we play for nothing Considerable; otherwise we shall fall into the Vice of Covetousness, and take Pleasure in winning, or be transported with Rage at ill Luck in losing; both which Vices seldom come unattended. Covetousness will tempt you to trick at least, if not to cheat; and Anger, to swear, and perhaps blaspheme. Go to a Gaming-Table at the Publick Places, see the Transports of the Winners and Losers at *Bath, Tunbridge, Epsom, &c.* and then ask yourself, Can Diversions, that so ruffle  
and

and disorder the Soul, that keep it in a perpetual Tumult of Passion, that make Men forget what they owe to God and to Men, Can they be lawful? The contrary speaks itself, and whoever sins this way, does it against Conviction, and in Defiance of the Almighty. Those that find themselves too much inclin'd to Game, and have not a due Government of their Passions at it, will do well to lay themselves under some voluntary and valuable Mulct, that the Tie of Interest may help to restrain them. Yet one would think that Christians, who are bid to pluck out their very Eyes, and cut off their very Hands, if they offend them, should not need to be instructed to part with unnecessary Sports, rather than to fall into Temptation. He that plays sinfully lays his Soul at Stake, which is surely of too great Worth to be ventur'd on the Cast of a Die. Those that give themselves up to Gaming, make it no more a *Recreation*. Such a Man toils as much at it as he who labours for Work; is there any so painful as that of the Mind, as the Hopes and Fears of the covetous Man, and the Impatience and Rage of the Angry?



## D R E S S .

**I**F Dress, as we are told in Scripture, was to cover Nakedness, it seems in our Days not to answer the End of it, especially with the Ladies; who, one would imagine by their Dress, are so far from reckoning themselves obliged to their Mother *Eve*, for dressing them, that they are for throwing away the very Fig-leaves; they have already uncover'd their Shoulders and Breasts, and as they have gone so far in a few Months, what may they not do in Years? They should consider that Clothes were not the Effect of Pride, but of Sin, and that instead of making them vain, it should humble  
and

and mortify them, as having lost that Innocence which was a much greater Ornament to them. than the most glorious Apparel can be. Since Shame was the Original of Clothing, it ought to be modest, and all Fashions which are not so, are sinful; arguing the Wantonness of the Wearer, and provoking that of the Spectator; both which carry Sin in them.

The defending the Body from Cold seems to be, to many, not a principal, but an accidental End of Apparel. Naked Breasts and naked Bosoms, in both Sexes, shew us that Health, as desirable as it is, is not consider'd by Youth, when any strong Passion is in the way. Those Ladies that would catch Cold at the Fanning of a Summer-Evening's Breeze, bear the rudest Winter-Blasts, to lay open their Breasts and Shoulders; the most delicate of 'em are insensible of Wind or Weather. Would one not believe they are so warm'd within, that they are insensible of Cold from without? And what must Men think of such Women, who will endure so much to be so much seen? Nothing in the World is so easily communicated as Desire; and instead of mortifying it, the very Churches are the Places that help now to inflame it; People dress for them as wantonly as for the *Play-House*: And a Woman has not any Beauty which she will not take care to expose there to Advantage. Hence it is, that Divine Service, instead of raising Men and Womens Souls in Devotion to the great *Creator*, is often made use of to convey wanton Glances to each other; and when they pretend to be praying to be delivered from Temptation, they with Pleasure give themselves up to it. God, who will not be mock'd, knows the Heart, and will at the last Day call them to a dreadful Account for this wicked Abuse of Holy Ordinances.

Another End of *Apparel* is the distinguishing of *Sexes* and *Qualities*, which, like the other two Ends of it, *Modesty* and *Health*, is neglected and despis'd. Women, without blushing, assume the *Coat*, *Periwig*, *Hat* and *Feather*, and ride as furiously as if there was really nothing

nothing in Sex, or they desired there should be no Difference. What a mean Opinion must such Ladies have of the Delicacy of the Heiress of *Burgundy*, Grand-mother of *Charles* the Fifth, who falling from her Horse, and breaking her Thigh, refus'd the Assistance of the Surgeon, and chose to die rather than have her Modesty offended. God himself expressly commanded the Jews that the *Man* should not wear the *Apparel* of the *Woman*, nor the *Woman* that of the *Man*: But our Ladies like our Politicians, think the Jewish Laws do not extend to Christians, and resolving at any Rate to please, will wear a *Hat* or a *Head*, as it sets them off best. To distinguish Qualities by Dress was one of the ancient Uses of it: The *Romans* were very strict in their several Distinctions. *Gorgeous Apparel is for Kings Courts*, as our Saviour himself tells us. Men and Women should content themselves with that sort of Clothing which agrees with their Sex and Condition, not striving to exceed or equal that of a higher Rank, nor raise Envy in their own. What Difference is there now between the Dress of a *Citizen* and a *Courtier*, of a *Taylor* and a *Gentleman*, of a *Servant* and a *Master*? The *Maid* is very often mistaken for the *Mistress*, and the *Valet* for my *Lord*. The general Depravity of Mens Minds appears as much in this Corruption, as in any; the Neglect of Decency and Order, the Confusion of Ranks and Degrees, produce Contempt of them; and Men fail in the Respect Inferiors owe to Superiors. *Honour to whom Honour*, is one of the Laws of the Gospel, which are forgotten, and Men live in all Things as if they were their own Masters, and had no Rule to walk by but their Wills.

*Foppery* in Dress has been so well ridicul'd by Men of *Wit*, that we are less troubled with it than ever. While it was a *Sin* only, and was rank'd under the Heads of *Pride* and *Vanity*, while *Damnation* was only the Punishment, it flourish'd amain; but now it is become a *Fest*, and the *Fop* is sure to be laugh'd at; he avoids that for the Sake of his *Character*, which he would not have avoided for the Sake of his *Salvation*.

*Clothes*

*Clothes* add no true Worth to any one, and 'tis therefore foolish as well as sinful to waste Time or Thought in Drefs. Beauty needs no Ornament, and Deformity admits none, but what we ought all to covet, *that of a meek and quiet Spirit*. Clothe yourselves as richly as you can with all Christian Virtues, which can only render you lovely in God's Eyes, and will not a little help to render you amiable in those of Man. The Beauty of the Mind charms more than that of the Body, and no Beauty of it is so charming as Virtue. Charity will incline you to look to your Neighbour's Clothing as well as your own. To *clothe the naked* is one of the Duties that have etrrnal Blifs for their Reward; and the saying of a good Christian on that Subject, tho' a homely one, is a solid one, *One plain Coat thou puttest upon a poor Man's Back will better become thee than twenty rich ones thou shalt put upon thy own*.

Youth is very apt to run into Error in Drefs. Vanity proceeds from Levity of Mind, for which the Young, and especially of the softer Sex, want *Ballast*; they have an inborn violent Desire of pleasing; the ways which lead Men to Authority and Glory being shut to them, they strive to make amends for that Loss by the Graces of their Person. And 'tis on this account that the *Colour of a Ribbon*, the *Curl of the Hair*, or the setting on a *Patch* too high or too low, are with them Matters of Importance. This Excess is become very extravagant, and we are not satisfy'd with our *Modes* and *Fashions*, but are made after those of our Neighbours. Thus to the Love of Drefs is added that of Novelty. They do bewitch weak Minds, and filling them with Pride and Folly drive out every good thing, and choke the Seeds of Religion and Virtue. Wise States have not only set Rules for *Habits*, but also for Furniture of Houses, and the Decorations of Gardens. Our neighbouring State, that of the *United Provinces*, restrain'd by a Law the extravagant Expence of Flowers; and our own Statute-Books shew us, that several Laws have

have been made with respect to Clothes, which are not the more unreasonable for their being obsolete. The Houses and Tables of private Persons not being regulated by Publick Authority, every one lives according to his Fortune and Ambition; and perhaps a Regulation of such Abuses would not be thought consistent with the Liberty of a Free People. The *Romans* made Laws to regulate Eating, grown to an extravagant Expence by the *Asiatick* Luxury, introduc'd by their Eastern Conquests. But those Laws were not effectual, and if Reason will not direct People not to waste their Health and Estates on Superfluities, Edicts and Statutes will have no Force, and Sicknefs and Poverty will only reform them. How ruinous this Pomp has been to Families is too notorious to need Explanation. The Ruin of Families draws after it Corruption of Manners, and thence follows the Ruin of States.

This Vanity excites in Persons of mean Birth an inordinate Desire of Gain, which prostitutes them to all Measures that may get them Wealth to support it. It runs People of Quality so deeply into Debt, that they not only dip their Estates beyond Recovery, but do a thousand mean things which an honest poor Man would be ashamed of, to maintain their Expence. How often has the gilt Coach been seized by the Mercer, and all the fine Furniture been the Prey of Executions? How scandalous is it to see a Gentleman's Gate crouded with *Dunners*, while the Lord himself sneaks out at the Back-door, mocks their Impatience, and laughs at their Credulity! *Modes* and *Fashions* are the main Causes of this Luxury: Dress and Furniture must be changed according to the Whim of the *Upholsterer*, and *Tailor*, or those fantastick Men and Women who preside over them. This Inconstancy creates a vast Loss in what you are to part with, and as great an Expence in what you are to purchase. The Seller will have Cunning enough to make you pay for your Love of Novelty, and the Buyer cheat you as much for your Desire of Change.

The

The Mind is thus constantly taken up with this costly Variety; Gravity and Simplicity of Manners are exploded, and Levity and Folly take place of them.

Ladies and Gentlemen should learn, that true Honour is acquir'd by nothing but good Conduct, and that good Sense is preferable to either Gold or Diamonds. The Young should often be put in mind of Things useful and solid, but not so often as to tire them with your Lectures. Endeavour, you that are their Teachers, to divert the Thoughts of the Ladies, especially from a vain Affectation of the Beauty of the Body, by drawing them to a Consideration of that of the Mind; not that outward Beauty is to be neglected, and 'twould be too severe a Lesson to teach it to such as Nature has been liberal to. Whoever shall affect to act the Philosopher on this Head, will sooner make himself ridiculous than his Pupil wise. Beauty has too sensible Effects in those that possess it, and in those that behold it, for them to be convinc'd by all your grave Arguments, that 'tis not worth taking care of. If you advise them not to set their Hearts too much upon it, you must at the same time let them know you are sensible that the Heart will be touch'd by it; and that, as it is one of the greatest of temporal Blessings, so they should be thankful for it to Heaven, and regard it as the Gift of God; to preach against it would be to as little purpose as to preach against *Health*, *Riches*, and *Peace*. All these Blessings may be abus'd, as well as that of Beauty; but it will not hinder the World from desiring them, and from envying those that enjoy them. The chief thing you have to do is to give young Persons true Notions of Nature, and shew them how Religion improves and betters it; how it turns every thing to its true End; what great Wisdom it is to make *temporal* Blessings instrumental to *eternal*, and the Excellencies of the *Body* subservient to those of the *Soul*; that Religion and Virtue are the greatest Beauties in Christians, and Christianity the highest Exaltation

Exaltation of Nature, and of right Reason. To rail at *Beauty* would be as *impertinent* as to rail at *Light*: Give it, on the contrary, its due Praise; confess it has a natural Splendor, lovely in itself, and charming to the Beholder; but tell those amiable Creatures, that if a lovely Soul animates a lovely Body, the Charms of Beauty receives new Graces. Piety gives a check to Lust, and turns Desire into Admiration. Virtue and Beauty join'd together have great Advantages above Virtue alone appearing in a homely Dress; but if Virtue gives not much Lustre, it has fewer Temptations and is a lasting Blessing. Beauty wears and decays, Virtue shines on with one continu'd Brightness; Beauty occasions daily Torments and Disquiets, Virtue is always full of Peace and Joy; Beauty however will always find Advocates, and plead for itself so strongly, that let us declare as warmly as we will on the side of Virtue, we must not abandon that of Beauty, but inculcate the Mischiefs that attend the priding one's self in it, and setting one's mind too much upon it. Beauty has as well Power over the Judgment as over the Eyes, and 'tis more eligible to make it a Friend to Virtue than an Enemy.

It is said of the *Judges* at *Athens*, who were so celebrated over all the World for their *Justice*, that by a *Woman* they lost the Name of *uncorrupt*, because, tho' she was *faulty*, yet after they had seen her they cou'd not judge her *guilty*. Another Lady, as fam'd for her Eloquence as her Antagonist was for her Beauty, had by her Pleading won the Cause, 'till the lovely Creature came into Court, and by her Presence only, turn'd the *Scale of Justice*. Nothing more cheats and imposes on the Judgment than Beauty, and the *Athenian* Lady is not the only one that has gain'd her Cause by shewing herself. Yet after all, the Victory is imaginary, not real: The more victorious Beauty is, the more is it expos'd to be conquer'd. That which many love, is not easily guarded; the Heart may resist the At-

tacks of several open Invaders, but while it is defending itself against them, a secret one will steal in and surprise it. What Security is there in the Possession of a thing that every one covets? The more that beautiful Women conquer, the more danger they are in: New besiegers will come to the Assault, and how can that Fort always defend itself from without, which has a Traitor ready to betray it from within? Flattery, like the Voice of the Siren, draws them on to their Ruin; the Heart greedily sucks in the Poison, and when they are infinitely pleas'd themselves, they think 'tis a sort of Ingratitude not to be pleasing. Nothing, therefore, is more dangerous and deceitful than celebrated Beauty. It deceives the Person that possesses it more than those that are dazzled with it: It disturbs, weakens, and intoxicates the Soul. There are some Ladies so fond of their own Faces, that they have not so strong Rivals in the other Sex as they are to themselves. But Age will not fail to punish them for this Idolatry, and the Wrinkles in their Faces shall in their turns make them look as hideous as ever their Charms made them lovely in their own Eyes. What is it that young Ladies propose to themselves by the mighty Pains they are at to appear beautiful? Is it to gain Lovers or Husbands? Dare they answer for the former? No; they will hardly own they have any Meaning at all in it, and do not think of Men, when their whole Soul is employ'd in contriving to charm them. Let us suppose for them that they have a lawful End in view, to marry to their Advantage: How can they hope to have *good* Husbands if they have not *wise* ones? And Beauty without Merit and Virtue, is a Bait for Fools. To marry *happily*, a Woman must marry *prudently*, and if she makes choice of a *Fop*, she will not be the happier, as she is not the wiser, for her Beauty. Let her think that the shining Lustre, even of Youth, wears off, when seen too often, and at too near a Distance: that *Possession* sees with other Eyes than *Desire*, and that  
Beauty

Beauty will not make an ill-natur'd Fellow a good Husband, nor a filly Woman a good Wife; Wisdom will be too hard for the Frowardness of a peevish Temper, which is soften'd by Management more than Beauty: A Man cannot see it when he's out of Humour; then Art and Complacency will open his Eyes, and restore it to its former Empire. What a Curse is it to Ladies to have this Pride of Beauty last when they are old? How ridiculous is it in them to confound Age and Youth, to fill up and hide the Breaches of Time with Patches and Paint; to place the gay Decorations of *Twenty* on a wither'd Carcase of *Threescore*? yet how many Examples of this kind do we daily meet with in the World? Women that think their Beauty is the last thing that fades, and that their Spring holds all the Year? These Reflexions on Beauty have interrupted those on Dress; they cannot however be term'd a Digression, for why else do Women dress out as they do, unless it is to be handsom?

*Affectation* in Dress always misses the End it aims at, and raises *Contempt* instead of *Admiration*. Negligence is on the other hand an Error that ought to be corrected; Neatness, Proportion, and Decency of Dress, are always commendable. Virtue itself is disagreeable in a Sloven; and that Lady who takes no Care of herself will find no body will care for her. The Fault is the Excess: Mind your Persons, but mind your Understandings too, and do not be *Fools* to be *Beaus* and *Belles*. Look on the Simplicity of the Ancients in their Statues; observe especially the Figures of the *Greek* and *Roman* Ladies, you will find the Hair tied negligently behind, the Draperies full, and carelessly hanging, which give Grace and Majesty to the Body. I doubt not, Women that are not well instructed in these things, wou'd by the Statues have a sorry Opinion of the antick Dresses; but when they are well taught what Elegance, what Proportion, and what Convenience there are in them, they will be apt to think that

the Ladies of *Athens* and *Rome* were as much politer than the Moderns in their Dress as the Men in their Learning. A very learned Prelate of this Age has endeavour'd to restore *antick* Habits; but all that endeavour to govern the Nation of *Fops*, will find they have to do with a most unruly People, whose *Heads* being never settled, how can we expect their *Habits* should be? *Were Womens Souls*, says the Bishop, *ever so little elevated above the Prejudices of Fashions, they would presently have a great Contempt for their affected Curlings and Frizlings, which are so remote from the natural Hair, and for Dresses of too fashionable and exact Figure. I am satisfied, it is not at all to be expected they should take up an antick outside, it would be an extravagant thing to desire it: but yet they might, without any Singularity, take the Relish of the ancient Simplicity in Habits, which is so noble, so gracious, so comely; and besides, so proper for Christian Manners. Thus conforming themselves to the present Customs, they would understand at least what they ought to think of the old one: They would hereby learn to obey the Mode as a troublesome Slavery; and then would only allow it what they could not refuse it. Let Ladies, above all things, consult Decency and Ease; never to expose nor torture Nature. Fashion is always aiming at Perfection, but never finds it, or never stops where it should: 'Tis always mending, but never improving: A true Labour in vain; and consequently those that follow it, are guilty of the highest Folly and Madness. To change for the sake of Changing, is to submit to the Government of Caprice; and that Man or Woman that is given up to it, will surely be as whimsical in the other parts of their Conduct. Is it sufficient for a reasonable Mind, to like a thing purely because 'tis new, or to dislike it because it is not? Must a foolish Fashion please me, for that 'tis a Novelty, and a good one displease, because I have try'd it and found it so? If Fops reckon wise Men out of their Wits when they are out of the Fashion, wise Men have certainly much more ground to think them mad when they are in it.*

These

These Considerations would arise from right Reason, if we had not the divine Light of Scripture to be our Guide. As Men only, we should avoid Foppery and Extravagance ; as Christians, we should study Modesty and Convenience. There are two Passages in the *New Testament*, which set the best Rule, particularly to Women with respect to their Habits. *Let not your Adorning*, says the Apostle, *be that outward Adorning of plaiting the Hair, and of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel, but let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the Sight of God of great Price.* And again, *In like manner also, that Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel, with Shamefacedness and Sobriety ; not with broider'd Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or costly Array, but (which becometh Women professing Godliness) with good Works.* Those who construe every thing in the Sacred Writings to the *Letter*, will run into innumerable Errors. Many thousand Heresies have sprung up from this pretended scrupulous Exactness. If Allowances are not to be made for figurative Expressions, we should meet with insuperable Difficulties. The Ancient and *Eastern* way of Thinking and Writing, cannot in all things be accommodated to the *Western* and Modern. Our Duty then is to keep as close to the Sense as we can, and not always to be confin'd to the Letter. The Quakers interpret these Passages of Scripture, as a Prohibition to Women to wear *Gold*, either in *Ear-rings*, or about their Clothes ; either in Lace, or interwoven, or embroider'd, and all plaiting of Hair : 'Tis true, they have lately enlarg'd their Borders, and taken or rejected what Part of the Prohibition suited their Fancies best. *Costly Apparel* is as much forbidden as Lace ; yet what People are at greater Cost in their Silks and Linen ? But Habits of Price, and all Pearls and Jewels, Necklaces or Bracelets, and Clothes of Expence, are not to be understood in the strict and literal Sense ; the Nature of the Thing requires it

not, any more than the Way and Manner of Expression.

No body can discern any greater Danger and Malignity in Gold or rich Habits, than in any other Metal, other Stones, or coarser Garments. Whether it be the Wisdom, or Folly, or the Fancy of People, that has set a greater Value upon these things than on others, is no matter, there is certainly no greater Evil in one than another; they are all in their own Natures alike innocent; and tho' they prove sometimes the Occasions of great Mischiefs, yet they are never properly the Causes of them, but the Passions and Desires of People towards them; who, to compass them, will take Courses which must consequently produce mischievous Effects. They are, in this Case, not unlike to good Countries, that border on the Kingdoms of two mighty Princes; who, finding their Convenience, fall to Wars about them, tho' the Countries gave no Provocation or Encouragement to either. If the Weight, Lustre, or Rarity give these things any extraordinary Excellence above others, the Delight and Pleasure People take therein is but reasonable; and whatever Evils follow thence, are by no means chargeable upon those inanimate Things, but on the Men that cause them. These Things naturally are no worse than Light and Lustre in the Sun, Shape and Comeliness in a Tree, or Beauty, Fragrance, and Variety of Form and Colour in the Flowers and Herbs. They are all of them God's Creatures, and consequently good. The Creator has made nothing in vain; and of what other use are these glorious Parts of his Creation than that to which Man puts them? When by great Industry and Toil he has dug the Ore out of the *Mine*, and the Diamond out of the *Rock*; when he has refin'd, with a great Toil, the one, and polish'd the other; shall he not have the Pleasure of using them? Were those Riches intended to be hid for ever in the Bowels of the Earth? Has he err'd in tearing them up to take  
them

them out of them? Or were they conceal'd there by Providence to give a Price to them, by the Difficulty and Labour of their Discovery? Can they be better employ'd, if they must be employ'd at all, than in Ornaments to the most beautiful Part of Mankind, for whom the World, and all that is in it, was created?

Supposing Pearls, Diamonds, and other such Treasure, acquire their Value and Esteem from the Opinion of the World, and Peoples Fancies, and that this be ill grounded, and run out into a blameable Excess, yet it is not reasonable to think that they are all of them absolutely prohibited, because Men entertain false Notions of, and are deceiv'd in them. Men have as much true Reason to value *these* as any other material things whatsoever. If we can judge of Beauty or of Usefulness, what is there more useful and beautiful? Whether their Worth lies in Opinion or Judgment; yet as the World was formerly, is now, and always will be ordered, it is absolutely necessary, that some things should be accounted of greater Value and Excellence than others; there could be otherwise no living in the World; no Trade or Commerce could be carried on without such Change and Bargain. And if the Wisdom of all the World, in all Ages, has center'd in this, that such and such things should be accounted best and valued highest, 'tis great Presumption that they are truly the most excellent and valuable things. 'Tis downright Demonstration that it is necessary to account them so, and that such Opinion is well enough grounded; because 'tis of absolute Necessity, that something should be reckon'd best, and better than another: and nothing has at any time prevail'd above these things in civiliz'd Countries. If then any thing is better than another, what must it be that gives it a Price? Its Beauty, its Brightness, its Solidity. Are there more valuable Qualities in other things, or are Diamonds and Gold deservedly reckon'd the Riches of this World? Are not Riches Blessings, the Reward of

Industry, and the Instruments of Charity, the most amiable of all Christian Virtues?

It may be objected, that the *Indians* parted with their *Gold* and *Pearls*, for *Glass* and *Trifles* to their first Discoverers: But it does not thence follow, that what the common Esteem of Mankind makes valuable is not truly so; for tho' *Glass* and *Gold* are of equal Value to a Man that neither uses, nor knows how to make use of either; yet to one that does both, they are very unequal: And when the *Indians* knew how much their *Traders* valued *Gold*, what a deal of *Glass*, and other gaudy things were to be bought by a little of it, they grew wiser, and learn'd its Excellence. Nevertheless it must be own'd, that if all the World should set a Stamp of Value upon *Glass*, or any thing else, it would bring the now cheap Ornaments of it, us'd by mean People, under the same Prohibition as *Gold* and *Diamonds* are said to be, by the two Texts before cited; and no body will pretend that to wear them now is unlawful; and therefore to wear Ornaments of *Diamonds*, or *Gold*, cannot be so of themselves, but must be made so by the Pride and Extravagance of those that wear them.

If we consider the way and manner of Expression in those two Texts, tho' it is very positive, yet the Meaning of the Words is not absolutely to prohibit People the using of *Gold*, *Pearls*, and precious Stones in their Apparel. To find out what is really meant by it, we must examine some other Passage of Scripture, where the *Negative* is as strong, and yet the Prohibition cannot in the least be thought to be *general*. We are forbidden to lay up *Treasures upon Earth*, where *Moth* and *Rust* doth corrupt, and where *Thieves* break through and steal, but to lay up for ourselves *Treasures in Heaven*. Tho' the Expression here be very positive, yet the Meaning of these Words is not absolutely to prohibit People to treasure up Wealth; for the Necessities and Duties of Life make it unavoidable. There can be no Provision made for Families and  
Children

Children without such treasuring; there can be no such thing as Stock, Substance, Trade, or Commerce, unless some People do it, to be ready at an Exigence: And we must imagine, Christ intended to forbid all Merchandise and Traffick, and Provision for Children and Families, if we think we are absolutely prohibited to *to lay up Treasures here on Earth*: As absolutely and positively as the Injunction is express'd, the Meaning of the Expression is, That Christians should be more intent upon the securing everlasting Happiness to themselves, than the short and perishing Riches of this World. Abundance of such strong Expressions are to be met with in Scripture, which taken in the literal Sense are directly opposite to other Parts of it. The not taking care of one's Family is said to be a Sin worse than that of *Infidelity*; and what Care can be taken of it without laying up of Riches? When things are of themselves unlawful, as *Rioting and Drunkenness, Chambering and Wantonness, Strife and Envyings*, the negative must be always taken in the full Sense: But when things are not unlawful of themselves, there is a Sense of Reason and Equity to be enquir'd after, which the Circumstances of Time, Place, and Person, must determine. Things that are of their own Nature indifferent, and made criminal only by the Abuse of them, tho' the Words of the Prohibition be general, yet they can be no farther understood to be prohibited than they are abus'd. So the Apostle prohibited Women *plaited or broider'd Hair, Gold, Pearls, and expensive Apparel*; yet we must not understand the Injunction, to prohibit the Use and Ornament of any of those things in general, tho' it be express'd in very positive Terms; because there is nothing in their natures evil, but what is evil is by abuse, and accidentally become so; and though there are several Places in Scripture, an Instance of one of which has been given, express'd as generally and absolutely as these, yet they bear Exceptions, Reserves, and a more limited Sense.

The Design and Purpose of the Injunction seem to be the recommending such things to the Women, as wou'd make them good Wives, and good Christians, *as good*

*Works* will do ; as also such decent, grave, external Habit, as would answer and become those good Works ; give no Scandal and Offence, and minister no Temptations to another. Such a Design is no way obstructed by a moderated and well regulated Use of all or any of these Ornaments ; and therefore, there is neither Need nor Reason to conclude, that all or any of these Particulars here mention'd are universally forbidden to Women, either from the Nature of the Things themselves, or from the Way and Manner of Expression, or from the End propos'd by the Apostle.

But notwithstanding it may be reasonable to think, this *Prohibition* is not to be understood literally and strictly, yet something is undoubtedly forbidden by it ; as all such Gaiety and Costliness of Attire, as provoke Pride, and foster Vanity. Every thing sinful, and tending to God's Dishonour, is here prohibited ; and if either newness, rarity, or richness of Dress, occasion Vanity and Pride, they are certainly here condemn'd. 'Tis true, it seems difficult to be conceiv'd, what kind of Pride it is that can be rais'd in Peoples Minds on these Accounts ; how they can think more highly of themselves than others, and than they ought to do, because they have other Clothes ; and are what they call better dress'd than they are. Be it what it will, 'tis evident that the Effect, and not the Cause, is here forbidden, since the Cause is every thing by which the Fancy is blown up ; and it is not only Gold, Pearls, and costly Apparel, that blow it up, but any thing People put a Value and Esteem upon, and think it raises them above their Neighbours : For 'tis not the Riches of a thing that is always the ground of its Esteem ; if 'tis of less Price and more modish it is more desir'd, and more valu'd by the Wearer ; and if loose and flowing Hair were fashionable, it would occasion more Pride and Vanity than the plaiting or broidering it. Who does not know that the things that cost most do not always please best ? they must be in the fashion also ; and if they do not please, and are not fashionable,

able, they are not so apt to create that secret, vain Complacency in the Mind, which arises from the Conceits that what they wear becomes them, and sets them in Rank above their Neighbours: Wherefore, 'tis plain, that this kind of Pride, whatever it is, is not grounded upon Costliness or Worth, but upon Comeliness and Fashion; for that People would be proud of Toys and Tinsel, Straws and Rushes, if the Court and City brought them into a Mode: And one cannot doubt, but that vain Fellows were as proud in their *Doyley* Stuffs, when they were in the Mode, as in their embroider'd Coats; and that Women may have as much Pride in *Calicoes* as in *Brocades*. Since 'tis Haughtiness and Conceit of Mind which the Scripture intends to forbid; therefore Diamonds, Gold, rich Clothes, or plaited Hair, are not particularly intended, any farther than they prove the Occasion of that Conceit and Haughtiness; because other mean things, if in Fashion and Use, occasion them as commonly and as certainly as the most costly things. Is not a Lady as proud of her *Straw Hat* and *Country Habit* as of her *Park* and *Play-dress*, for that it makes her please as well, she thinks, and to please is the End of all Dress, in the light Vein?

What has been said for the *Matter* of Attire, is also said as true, for the *Manner* of it. No one particular Mode either is or can possibly be forbidden, as that which necessarily occasions this Vanity and Levity, because it is not *This* or *That* particular Fashion that only occasions Levity or Vanity: For another Dress does the same thing when 'tis become the Mode; and 'tis foolish to imagine such a Mode is the *proudest* that ever was, since People are alike proud in all; and few or none were ever proud of their Dress if they thought it out of Fashion, or did not wear it in Spite and Opposition to the Fashion. No body can imagine a great Lady wou'd never throw aside her *Forehead Cloth*; and another, as great a one, her *High-crown'd Hat*, out of a Spirit of Humility: Such are as proud in *Singularity* as others in the *Fashions*.  
Whatever

Whatever Pride arises from, Dress is owing chiefly to the Opinion People have, that what they wear is modish and becoming ; wherefore all Fashions are very near alike hazardous, one as the other, and as apt to raise the Conceit of weak and trifling Minds. If Fashion be the most obvious and apparent ground of Vanity, and the Foundation of this foolish Pride, it must certainly be reasonable, if not absolutely necessary, to avoid Conformity and Compliance with it. This would be a natural Consequence of the Effects of Mode, if those Effects were true, which they are not, since the avoiding the Fashion would signify nothing at all. For what is on this account absolutely necessary to some, is as necessary to all. If one must not be proud and vain, neither must another be so ; if one must avoid the common and ordinary occasion of Pride, so must another, so must all. Now 'tis impossible for all to avoid the Fashion, for if all avoided it, how could any thing be the Fashion ? And that which all or most agree in, and consent to, will be necessarily the Fashion : So all Peoples avoiding the Fashion would be only setting up another Fashion, if they all fell into one and the same ; or leaving every one to their own Fancies and Whimsies, it wou'd occasion as much, and perhaps more Pride, than all their agreeing in one. There would be Emulation and Outvying one another ; Envy would be added to Pride, and neither Levity or Richness of Dress be a whit the more abated for it. Upon the whole, the general Consent of most Wearers makes a Dress *modish*, and when that has once prevail'd, it unavoidably becomes the Standard and Measure of Decency. If we think a Fashion awkward and unbecoming, it is because we have not long enough been us'd to it, or do not find it generally approv'd, or because it has been long laid aside ; but to think it sinful to follow a Fashion, because new, and to conform in these Cases to Custom, is to set up our own Imaginations against the whole World's, not only of our Time, but of all former Times, whose  
Modes

Modes and Garbs have all along been very different: and tho' some appear more antick and extravagant than others, yet that proceeds rather from a Fondness of our own Conceits and Customs, and a liking to what we have been us'd to in our own Nation and Times, than from any true Grounds in Nature or in Reason. To conclude, that one Fashion is more proud and sinful than another, argues weakness of Judgment, or want of Consideration: Not that some sort of Fashions do not minister more to Wantonness and Immodesty than others, and take up much more Time, and hinder People from doing the Good they would otherwise do; but that one Fashion is prouder than another, is not at all evident, tho' it is commonly thought so.

When things are generally decry'd without any Reason, or good Foundation, good and honest People are scandaliz'd at they know not what, and Scruples are begotten in some weak Minds which they cannot easily get rid of. Such as have been mistaken to a Compliance with a literal Sense of these Injunctions, are apt uncharitably to censure such as have not taken these Injunctions to be general and unlimited, and have innocently follow'd the Fashions. This Censoriousness is a much greater Fault than what they condemn, and perhaps has more Pride in it than they imagine others take in their Dress. The Superiority they secretly assume over them, by their pretended Innocence, is more exalted than any thing that can arise from Conceit of Habit. And let these over-scrupulous Men and Women think what they please, 'till they can discover the Unreasonableness and Unlawfulness of complying with the Customs of the Times, which are not in themselves sinful; or 'till they can discover a better Standard of Decency than the general Consent of People, there is no reason to judge otherwise than that the common Garb is innocent and safe. It may indeed become the Occasion of Peoples Pride and Vanity, and so in any thing else; wherefore when

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we find ourselves exalted by such Trifles, and humbled by forbearing them, 'tis our Duty to quit and change them immediately ; for the best Endowments of Body and Mind cannot excuse Conceit of ourselves, or Contempt of others, and much leis any gay Attire, that is truly none of ours, but borrow'd from the Earth and Sea, and Birds and Beasts, and little ugly Insects, and only serve to conceal our Imperfections and Deformities.

Virtue and good Qualities must needs run very low, when People seek for Honour and Esteem from such poor Vanities as these, and scorn and injure too, perhaps, their Neighbours for the want of them ; of which if they had but a little more, they would envy and hate them : Not that every Act of Complacence in Apparel, or every Thought, that such and such a thing becomes them better than another, is sinful, but the Excess of such Complacence, and the setting a greater Esteem upon themselves, and a less on others, than is due upon these silly Accounts ; which elate the Hearts of foolish Creatures with idle Fancies of Dignity and Honour, and withdraw them from more grave and serious Objects, on which they might and should be better employ'd. The Applause that arises from Niceness or Richness of Dress, is apt to puff up such airy Spirits, tho' at the bottom 'tis false, and so generally accompany'd with Envy, that 'tis far from being an Advantage to the Persons to whom it is given. If you are complimented on the Gaiety or Cost of your Clothes, when present, you are sure to be rally'd when absent for your Affectation in the Choice of them, or your Aukwardness in wearing them.

Ladies are loth to allow any Excellency in each other that they have not themselves in as great Perfection, and there is a way of setting off native Beauty with Ease and Innocence, which will charm, without the Danger of running outward Ornaments into Folly and Extravagance. 'Tis a hard Matter to dress Age and Deformity into Beauty ; whereas any thing with De-  
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cency will look well on those whom Nature has given good Looks to ; and this Consideration should have weight with the Sex, if the other more serious one cannot affect them ; which would be very much to be lamented, since the Beauty and Grace they aim at in their Dresses, if they attain it, is no such mighty Prize ; a sickly Creature of the Imagination, born and nourished unaccountably, and lost by Humour, and a thousand Accidents.

This we may rest assur'd of, that all such Attire as serves to *Looseness* and *Immodesty* is forbidden by the Scripture : and this not only if it be design'd to serve such wicked Purposes, but also if it has a natural, an easy, or an usual Tendency to it : The Design itself is abominable ; the heating of the Fancy, the inflaming the Heart, the kindling impure Desires that will at last consume both Body and Soul, is what one should not think of but with Terror and Abhorrence. To Dress with this Design, is, to be sure, not only *blameable* but *damnable*, without Repentance : 'Tis the worst they can do, and all they can do ; for nothing is wanting on their side to compleat the Sin. Ask yourselves then, you of the weaker Sex, when you are putting on your odious and unnatural Paints. Why do I redden this Cheek, and whiten this Forehead ? Why hide that Wrinkle, and expose that Charm ? What is it for but to heat and inflame, and to raise those Passions which you are afraid the Ruins of Time or Accident would not otherwise raise ? Be not anxious that the Beauties of Nature will not render you agreeable enough ; if you would not be more agreeable than consists with Religion and Virtue, think on what has been said before with the utmost Truth, that to dress with Design to please unlawfully, is to dress to Damnation. As the Design's taking Effect, does not at all depend upon you, neither will its missing its Effect excuse you, or diminish any thing of your Guilt or Punishment.

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Those whose only intent in Dressing is to appear gracious and amiable in the Sight of People, and to gain Affection and Good-will, may consider this general Rule, That the intending any thing is more or less innocent in itself, and would be, should the Intention take effect. If to appear gracious and amiable be, in itself, good, bad, or indifferent, the intending to appear so, whether it take effect or no, will be good, bad, or indifferent accordingly; wherefore to know how far you may dress with this Design, you must demand of yourself, what you desire that Grace and Comeliness for, and what Use you desire to make of Peoples admiring you; according as that is better or worse, so will your dressing and adorning yourself be more or less innocent.

Some of the ancient Christians, as *Tertullian* and others, seem to allow Wives a greater Liberty in dressing than Virgins, but they say it should be only where 'tis fairly probable, at least, that the Affections of the Husbands cannot otherwise be easily retain'd: But they at the same time reproach the Folly and Lightness of those Men, who consider'd such Appearances more than the true and only Ornaments, the virtuous and good Qualities of Women; and they restrain the Wives appearing handsomer than ordinary to the Husbands only, which may indeed be done in the Design, but not as to the Effects, which will also have Influence upon other People. Nevertheless, tho' there may be something of Reason in satisfying some Desires, yet there will be a great deal of Imprudence and Insecurity in it. Some Husbands may be light, wanton and fantastical themselves, and their Fancies prove but weak and simple Guides; they may in vain dress for them, but dress for others to purpose: Wherefore tho' they should be permitted to take a greater Liberty with respect to their Husbands and the pleasing them; yet because they live and converse with other People, they are prohibited, as well as other Women, such Dress as, notwithstanding

ing they design to hurt or please no body at all, yet may have in itself a natural, easy, or an usual Tendency to Evil, and prove Temptations to another.

All Men and Women are presum'd to act upon some Grounds ; our Reason and Faculties are given us to direct and govern us in all our Actions, and to consider with their Causes and Effects, Actions and Events, natural and necessary, probable and accidental, such as are like to be, and such as may possibly be ; and from these Abilities of considering, judging and determining, arises the Guilt and Condemnation of Precipitancy, Heedlessness, and acting inconsiderately. And as a Man is pity'd reasonably, who falls into Misfortunes which he could not foresee, nor possibly prevent ; but blam'd and condemn'd, who suffers what he neither needed nor shou'd have done : So is a Man or Woman excus'd for what Events are accidental and unusual from their Acts ; but blameable and chargeable with such Events as might be reasonably expected, and were both natural, and easily consequential of such their Actions, tho' they thought not on them, or at least design'd them not. When Men take the proper, natural, and ready means to the attaining of an End, and such as could not probably miscarry, such as they must needs have taken had they purposely design'd that End, it will be presum'd they intended it whether they did or no. Thus tho' a Dress or Fashion shou'd not be at all design'd to serve any evil or immodest Purposes ; yet if it naturally did so, if it easily tempted unwary forward Hearts, warm and deprav'd Fancies, if it rais'd unclean Ideas in the Minds of ill-dispos'd People, it were undoubtedly unlawful. Such Dress and Fashion must unquestionably be forsaken : There neither Multitude, nor Quality, nor Custom, cou'd excuse ; it wou'd be to no purpose to say they meant no Harm, for 'tis not enough not to design, but they must give no manner of just occasion of it : Tho' the Parties take not this occasion as a thing that is offer'd them on purpose, yet if it may be easily  
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and naturally, according to the wicked Inclinations and Propensities of People, taken and laid hold on, it is to be look'd upon as given. 'Tis true indeed he is in fault, and shall be punish'd, that takes the bad occasion not design'd to be given; but 'tis also true, that she is to be blam'd, and shall be punish'd, that offer'd so proper and so easy a Temptation.

These Reflexions are sufficient to alarm both Sexes, and make them cautious of giving or taking Temptations by Dress, so common now-a-days, that there is no Immodesty which Fashion does not seem to justify; and the Extravagance is so great, not so much as to the Expence as to the Mode, that in a little while the fair Sex will have lost their distinguishing Quality, Shame, and that which of all Charms is most winning, Modesty. They have been so us'd to dress at Pleasure, that they will hardly be brought to believe but they are left at intire Liberty in it, and may wear what Clothes they please, or even none at all, if it was the Fashion.

Those of them who would neither abandon Modesty, nor be confin'd by Scruple, may consider, that if the Garb be such as cannot easily and naturally tempt, then let the Event be what it will, the Party gave it not, and so it is innocent. In a word, to design a thing that's Evil, is Sin, tho' you don't effect it, because you have done all you cou'd; to dress with a Design to catch unwary and wicked Hearts, is therefore a Sin, whatever the Effect be. To effect an evil End may be a Sin, tho' you don't design it, because you take the proper and usual Courses to effect it, and because the Effect depends not on Designs and Purposes, but upon natural and proper Means, and because you knew, or ought to know, that that was very likely to be the Effect and Consequence of such your Actions.

The truth is, 'tis too obvious, that Women of all Conditions do not stand now to consider whether their manner of Dress be lawful, but whether 'tis modish and taking; they are so far from not designing to please in their Dress, that they have no notion of Dressing to any other Purpose.

pose. It is to be hop'd that this Rule has a great many Exceptions, and that there are many good Women who wou'd be glad to be inform'd how far they may comply with Modes, and not injure their Virtue. It is not easy to determine what kind of Dress does naturally, easily, and usually produce bad Effects, for Modesty and Shame itself in many Cases depend upon Usages and Customs of Places, and the Consent of such a People; and that which is accounted Modesty in some Countries, is lightly regarded in another. The Opinions of the same Nation alter by Time and Circumstances, and a too hasty and unkind Censure may pass on those Occasions, unless things are maturely consider'd. However Men and Women are not left in such Uncertainties, but they may, if they will, guess pretty tolerably where the Danger lies, and whence the Temptation rises; according to their Knowledge, and the best of their Guess, they are oblig'd to remove the Grounds of such Temptation, or else they will offend against the Rules of Scripture, which forbid Christian Women such Dresses as serve to Immodesty and Looseness; as also all such Attire as takes up too much of their Time, which is given to better Purposes, as has been already observ'd on the Head of *Employment*. What Account can those Ladies give of it, that waste whole Mornings in the Decorations of their Head only, and leave the rest of their Dress to consume their Afternoons? that are Hours at their Glass in adjusting themselves, and practise over the languishing Looks they are to carry abroad with them? That will not stir from it as long as there is a Hair out of its Place, and think a Day well spent if they have been well dress'd in it? Must not such set a higher Price on the Grace of their Body, than on the Beauty of the Mind? and can they be said to be all that while working out their Salvation? If they wou'd reflect a little on that great Business so necessary to their eternal Felicity, how much they have to do that is more considerable than what they are about, and that too little expended in adorning and setting out themselves is much more tolerable and safe

safe than too much, they wou'd want no great Advice in these Cases, nor much offend by such a Negligence. They must needs determine for themselves in all these Matters, and they may do it safely, on the better side, the Rule being short and easy. 'Tis unlawful to bestow that Time in dressing one's self which is due to God and Religion, which should be spent in his Worship and Service, and which is given on purpose to us to secure our everlasting Interest with him; or that Time we owe to our Neighbours, our Relations, or ourselves, in the several States of Life, and in the different Respects we have to them all. Tho' a Woman may be constant in her Prayers and Reading, or what other spiritual Exercises she may be upon, yet it is not enough if she employs those Hours on adorning herself, that are due to the Discharge of the Office of a good Wife, or Parent, or the Mistress of a Family: For these are all of them Duties, and must be paid, whereas the other might be better spar'd. It is not only an imprudent but a criminal Neglect in any Woman, to dedicate those Hours to Dress, which ought to be spent in looking after the Concerns of her Husband and Family, her Children and her Servants; the End and Business of her Relation as a Wife. Great Ladies will not have patience to read so uncourtly a Lecture. What! take them from their *Toilets* to turn them into the *Kitchen* or *Laundry*? Have not they Servants enough to look after the Affairs of the Family? And what have they to do in the Nursery, but to play away a Minute or two, which hangs on their Hands, with their Children? After this rate, they must be always in a *Disfabbille*, so ill-becoming every one that is not better drest by Nature. They cannot imagine the Time ill-spent, that is innocently employ'd over a Dressing box; but when they see Death at a nearer Distance, and remember what little Preparations they made for it, they will with horror look back on a Life of Pride, Vanity and Idleness which generally are Companions; and wish in vain, that they had made use of it in dressing out their Souls for Eternity.

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As to *costly Array*, mention'd by the Apostle, we may reasonably presume he forbids such Dress, as by its Expence prevents some People from doing that Good which they might otherwise have done, by Charity in its several Instances: Not that all Money expended on things pleasant and delightful is ill spent, or ought to have been bestowed on charitable Uses: An Opinion that has neither Truth nor Reason in it; for many things that are neither absolutely necessary, nor yet so strictly convenient, but that one may be well without them, are nevertheless very lawful, and indifferent to be us'd or let alone as we see fit. Otherwise it wou'd be unlawful to do almost any thing in the World but Alms: No one must purchase any thing, but what was of absolute Necessity, because the Superfluity might be better employ'd; and even of things of absolute Necessity, no one must take the better when the worse wou'd serve, because the Surplusage of Price might serve to charitable Uses; whereby the Mind wou'd be perpetually perplex'd. Sometimes the innocent and lawful Pleasures of this Life are in a manner necessary to the sweetening of Mens Cares; but as in this, so it is in Dress, the Excess of it is only blameable, and the Extremity to be avoided. That Expence in it which disables People from laying out any thing on good Uses, is to be condemned; when a Woman carries the Fortune of a Family about her, and almost labours under the Weight and Pressure of her Ornaments; when she is really in pain herself, for the fantastick Pleasure of thinking she is pleasing to another: This must needs be faulty, because it is choosing to do that, which is at least neither necessary, nor convenient, nor commanded, before that which is both excellent and necessary, as are Acts of Charity and Kindness, in their several Relations, and according to their several Qualities and Abilities. Since Charity and doing Good is the very End of God's bestowing Riches upon People, and the Pretence and Ground of their deserving them; as also the best and truest Use they can possibly make of them, they must surely be self-condemn'd

condemn'd that hinder themselves from putting Riches to this good Use, by laying them out so very extravagantly and unprofitably, to please a vitiated Imagination, and attract the Eyes of others: Thus they, in some Sense, defraud the poor and needy of the true and solid Comforts of Life, that sweep the Ground with that, whose Purchase wou'd have fed the Hungry, satisfy'd the Thirsty, and comforted the Hearts of the Sick and Imprison'd.

What shining Examples have we of the Primitive Christians, who parted with their costly Apparel, their Jewels and Ornaments, to feed and clothe the needy Servants of Christ! They are glorious ones, 'tis true; but are Lights hung out, to shew Men rather where they *may* go, than to direct them where they *must*. To imitate them in this is unquestionably very good, but yet not necessarily required of those that are not, nor those that are in the same Circumstances; but they may serve to shew, that these excellent and charitable Christians would have thought it an unpardonable Fault, to have bestowed any excessively superfluous Cost upon themselves, when they thereby disabled themselves from imitating so many noble and human Precepts in behalf of Charity, as we find in Scripture. Reason, as well as the divine Command, forbids all such Costliness of Apparel, as exceeds the Quality, and Ability of the Wearer. This Error is one Offence against Decency, and that natural and becoming Order, which the Wisdom and Custom of all Times and Places have agreed upon, as most convenient to discriminate the People one from another, to prevent Disrespect, Disorder and Confusion. The Power of Dress is very great in commanding Respect: A Peer's Robes strike a greater awe in the Vulgar than his most pompous Titles; and what wou'd the grave and solemn Decisions of the Magistrate signify to most People, if they were not wrap'd in Fur and Ermine? This Distinction of Garment has a more solid Foundation, than to humour the Pride of the Judge, or the Vanity of the Peer: All Nations agree in it; and we err when

when we any way endeavour to confound it. Tho' Excess in Apparel is not an Offence against God, barely consider'd, yet all kinds of Luxury, and this especially of Dress, in wise Governments, has more or less been frequently restrain'd by Penal Laws; which wou'd not have been done, had there been no Inconvenience, and no kind of Deformity and natural Indecency in it. The Inconvenience is most certainly the greatest that can happen to us, that occasions Poverty and Want; it exhausts the Gain of honest Traffick and Labour: What shou'd subsist the Family, breed up the Children, and support Trade and Credit, is trifled away in Shew and gay Appearance, not only to the Shame, but to the Ruin of the Husband. The best a Man can hope for from such a costly Wife, is to be pitied, after he has a while been laugh'd at by the World. Husbands are discourag'd in the Prosecution of their Business, when they see the Fruits of their Industry so lavishly, so filily, and suddenly squander'd away, by the light and wanton Fancies of their Wives: This frequently tempts them to a careless and desperate sort of Management, which quickly ends in Destruction: They first run into Debt to support the Vanity of their Wives; and the best way they at last find to get out of it, is Bankruptcy: They cannot pay all, and therefore will pay none: Fools in contracting their Debts, and Knaves in the Discharge of them. 'Tis impossible for a Woman to be a good Wife, that does not suit her Expences to her Husband's Circumstances: If she lov'd him, she would consult his Ease more than her Vanity; she would tremble to think on the Torture he must endure, from the Importunity of Creditors, to support her Luxury. No Pretence of Birth or Quality is an Excuse for this ruinous Excess. Ladies are not to consider what they were born, but to what their Children are born; nor when they pride it in their own Quality forget their Husbands: 'Tis by his Rank and his Estate they are to govern themselves in these Matters. They call their  
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Marriage *Changing their Condition*, and should remember, among other Senses of those Words, that they change their own Condition for that of their Husband, be it what it will, better or worse ; they must suit their Minds to it, and then the rest will follow as it should. Content is requisite to Happiness in all Stations, but most in a marry'd one ; and that Wife who aspires to a Figure above her Husband's Ability in Dress, shews all the World she despises his Condition, which must render her miserable ; and no Appearance she makes will raise the Envy of the Beholder ; but on the contrary, move their Contempt for a Creature, that amidst so much Misery can fancy herself happy. Pride is the occasion of this excessive Costliness and Gaiety of Apparel ; and she must have little Reason to be proud of herself, who is so ashamed of her Husband as to despise his Rank, and usurp a Figure which does not belong to it. It is very possible, and, I question not, very frequent, for Men and Women to bear as good and humble Minds under the richest Attire, as under the poorest : When they go according to their State and Quality, they do no more than is expected of them, and it is not taken so much notice of. Pride is generally fed by the Admiration of others, and we are not apt to admire that great and rich People go fine ; their Quality and State are an Excuse for their Dressing at more Expence than is necessary ; but it is impossible for them to have humble and good Minds, to exceed their Quality and Estates, without Pride ; which other Women as well as Wives ought to consider, for they are as guilty of this Extravagance, and from the same Motive, Pride, which is a most damnable Sin, and was undoubtedly forbidden in the very Text we have before cited on the Subject of Dress. What makes us over-value ourselves, and under-value others, must be sinful in Christians ; in whom Meekness and Modesty ought always to be conspicuous, from a Consciousness of our own Demerits. If we reflect, that Christ, the Saviour of the World, dy'd  
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for the poorest Man as well as for the Rich ; for the Beggar in his Rags, as well as for the Prince in his Purple ; how can we set ourselves so much above our Fellow-sinners, only for a little Difference in Appearance, and that all accidental ? For Nature has made the Beggar as beautiful as the Prince, and if renouncing the Helps of Art, the poor Woman should appeal to Nature, how vainly would the rich Lady have dressed out in Gold and Diamonds, if she laid by her Beauty with her Garments ? For 'tis remarkable, that every thing extravagant in the Conduct of Life, misses even the Purposes it intended.

Notwithstanding what has been said concerning Errors in Dress, we must not run away with Mistakes, nor conclude all things unlawful, because some things are. To think there is Merit in rejecting all Gaiety and Expendence in Apparel, is as dangerous as to lanch out into it. There are Niceties and Difficulties in the Injunctions we have been treating of, which are well worth considering ; for without such Consideration, People will argue obstinately, and censure confidently and uncharitably.

That may be accounted Pride and Haughtiness, which is perhaps the natural Air and Mien of a Person. A Gentleman of good Sense, and Easiness of Conversation, has the Misfortune to have past all his Life-time for a Fop ; and asserted, purely because by Nature or ill Custom, he has acquir'd such a Gate, that he cannot turn his Head without Trouble to him, thence it is that he is reckon'd stiff and proud ; whereas his Conversation, and manner of living with all his Acquaintance, is the freest imaginable. There is a Shiness also in several People which is taken for Contempt of others, and is a very Diffidence of themselves ; and there is also a Delicacy and Decency of both Sexes, which is mistaken for Pride : This in all Ages has produced a Set of slovenly Christians, who think 'tis not Saint-like to be neat. The Cloisters of Popish Countries

are very well furnish'd with them ; because the Inside of the Cup is commanded to be kept clean, they are of Opinion 'tis sinful to bestow any care on the Outside. Some Men of warm and corrupt Imaginations may receive Temptation from Dresses, that are not naturally and designedly immodest : In such Cases the Sin is their own, and they are not to be avoided because they abuse them. Tho' to dress on certain Occasions may take up more Time than one can suppose should be allow'd for it, and cause one to neglect a Duty requir'd of us : After-diligence may make it up, when such Negligence is not a common Practice. Accidents may happen which require costly Habits, and may, for the present, hinder doing that Good, for which Compensation may be made for the future. Every thing has its Season ; Occasions may offer where it may be lawful and expedient for People to exceed themselves in Habits, to forget their Qualities and Stations ; which they may after as reasonably remember, and return in Soberness and Constancy again to themselves ; for this Reason we should not be over-scrupulous ourselves in these matters, nor hasty in censuring others. There are too many things to be considered to determine quickly : One may with much more Ease acquit or condemn ones self than others in these Particulars, because we know ourselves much better, and can frequently recover to our Memory the Principles we go upon, and in what they are firm, and in what they fail. A little Understanding with a great deal of Sincerity and good Intentions, will be able to direct us sufficiently and safely in all these Cases.

All our Reflexions on Dress have hitherto turn'd on the *Negative*, what it is the Divine Laws would not restrain us from : What follows will be more in the *Affirmative*, and what it is we are positively enjoin'd : particularly what Ornaments all Christian Women should adorn themselves with, the *bidden Man of the Heart*.

*Heart, the Ornaments of a meek and quiet Spirit.* To adorn the Mind and not lay all their Time and Thoughts out in adorning the Body ; to fill it with Christian Virtues, Charity, Humility, Meekness, and Modesty ; set out the Heart with all spiritual Graces, make it as fine as you can with Divine Love. Its Beauty consists in its Purity, and tho' it is hidden to Man in a great Measure, 'tis known to the Omniscient, who takes delight in a pure Heart, and prefers it to Diamonds and Gold. The Minds of Christian Ladies should be fill'd with good Principles ; their Hearts should be stor'd with such good Qualities as are truly ornamental, and will make them as lovely and desirable as any exterior Garb can do. This adorning is to be in *that which is not corruptible*. Gold, Pearls, and costly Raiment, are of themselves perishable things ; things that corrupt, consume and wear away in time ; things that are eaten up with *Rust* and *Moth*, subject to *Thieves* and many Accidents. Whatever serves the Body, either for Use or Ornament, is, like its Body, *corruptible* : But the Mind, immaterial and immortal, requires and looks for Ornaments suited and proper to it. Among which, one considerable is a *meek and quiet Spirit*, a good and gentle Temper, a lowly and modest Opinion of themselves, a Mind content with their Condition, which is of more Value than the most costly Apparel, being of *great Price in the Sight of God*, commanded and approved by him. This is the readiest way for Christian Women to recommend themselves to God, and to their Husbands. What a weak Hold has that Woman of her Husband's Heart, that ties him only with a Curl or a Ribbon ? Virtue and Innocence will not fail of keeping the Ground they gain. All inward Accomplishments are lasting, they depend not on Caprice and Humour. Husbands that cannot be restrain'd by Duty, will not long be kept by Dress ; their Inclinations vary oftner than the Mode, but the good Qualities of the Mind have a commanding as well as engaging Influence ; they

make Husbands afraid of injuring so much Goodness, and engage their Affections by Respect and Esteem. The Soul, as the better Part of Man, deserves the more of our Care in adorning it: 'Tis the Guide to the Body, 'tis its Governor, and should be set out to the best Advantage: The Soul renders him a reasonable and religious Creature; the greatest Privilege and Honour he is capable of enjoying: And 'tis equally foolish and sinful to neglect it, whose Being is eternal; and be more solicitous for the Body, whose Being is transient and uncertain. When we dress the Mind out, we dress for Eternity; when we decorate the Body, 'tis but for a few Moments only. How invaluable then is our *spiritual* Clothing in comparison with our *temporal*? How much more Pains should we take in cultivating and improving the Mind, when we once are convinc'd of the Necessity of doing it? We shall want no Motives to it, no Arguments against the Vanity and Sin of spending our Riches and Time in outward Ornaments, for the neglecting the Soul to adorn the Body, as if a Man should be at great Expence to build the Walls and Outside of his House very fine and stately, and shew no manner of Contrivance in the Inside of it; regarding neither Beauty nor Convenience, nor intending any Furniture. This would be building for the Sight and Pleasure of People passing by, and wanting in the mean time an Habitation for himself; every one would cry out such a Man is either a Fool or a Madman, neglecting that which is most properly the House, and ought to be the most serviceable and convenient, for the sake of appearing well to Strangers, without any farther Use. They are as foolish and blame-worthy, who labour to adorn their Bodies, while the Mind lies waste and wild; What Hopes can they have to gain Admiration? The Mind is the Principle of Life and Motion, and is to give true Grace and Ornament to all their Actions. How shocking does a Body look with all the Advantages of Dress, when  
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the Soul is uncultivated and unimprov'd? Nay, Beauty itself, tho' much more amiable and charming than Dress, receives a good Part of its Graces from the Mind. Let a Body be fram'd ever so fine and handsom by Nature, if the Mind be weak or silly, the first Motive shews it, and as soon as it is seen, it is so far from being admir'd, that a fine Statue pleases as much, or rather more; for a fine Statue pleases always, a fine foolish Woman no longer than she is like a Statue, dumb; when she speaks she turns to an aukward irregular Figure, and loses her Comeliness immediately. This proves from whence that Beauty of all exterior Gesture and Action proceeds from the Mind, which being in itself accomplish'd inwardly, so governs and directs the outward Carriage and Behaviour of the Body, as to make it handsom and becoming. This Reflexion should, methinks, be sufficient of itself to put all such as desire Favour and Acceptance, upon cultivating and improving the Mind, which would heighten all the Advantages of the Body, and brighten their very Beauty. It would better answer the Ends they propose to themselves by Dress, than any other Ornaments, how modest, how costly soever. The Heart of Man is of itself invisible, so is God who acts all; there is nothing discovers itself sooner than the Heart, as hidden as it is, wherefore no Pains should be thought too much to let it appear well. As it is the mighty Spring that communicates Life and Motion to all the rest, so it is the Source of all beautiful and graceful Actions, and as it is pure or impure, the Streams that flow from it will partake of its Corruptions or Cleanness. How to improve the Mind has been spoken of already; every thing that drives Levity and Vanity from it, helps to its Improvement; every thing that fills it with them, adds to its Corruption, and should be avoided. People come to obtain good Qualities of the Mind, as they come by several Habits of the Body, by Use and Custom. Those that delight in Reading, in Praying, and Meditation, will take no more Delight in

Dress than serves to keep them from giving Offence. They will find enough in the Heart not to make them in love with themselves; and then they will not be so apt to flatter themselves, that others will be in love with them; nor labour much to effect it. They will be more desirous of the Esteem of wise and good Men, and that they know is not to be obtain'd by Shew and Expence. A sure way to drive such vain Thoughts out of their Heads, is to use themselves to think of the Dignity of their Being, of the Duties they were born to perform, and their Capacity to perform them; they will perceive they have Powers and Faculties different from, and superior to, those of other Creatures; that they can call to mind things past, can consider things present, and compare them with one another, know their Difference, and determine what to do in time to come; they can inquire into their own Original, and find their Species has not been from all Eternity, but was in time created by a Being existing necessarily itself, and voluntarily producing all things else. They find this powerful Being has created them with so many Wants, that they must needs depend upon him for Supply, which brings them by necessity to worship him by Prayer; yet has he crown'd them with so many Blessings, and good Things, that natural Gratitude excites them to return him Praise. This will unavoidably make them religious; Religion will as unavoidably make them despise the Poms and Vanities of this frail Life; and when once their Hopes are in Heaven, they will not disturb their pious and pleasant Meditations with Cares of rich and gay Apparel: They see evidently God made them for more sublime Offices, that he has given them Abilities and Powers to worship and serve him, and they will not spend their Lives in serving themselves, their Pride and Pleasure. Such Reflexions as these will induce them to strive with all their Might to obtain that Purity of Heart, which is so lovely in the Eyes of God and Man; and in  
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this Labour will the Good employ all that Time which the Light and Vain consume on Drefs; they will be convinc'd that it is the most just and reasonable thing in the World, that God who has been so beneficent and good to them as to make them what they are, and to give them what they have, and is so powerful as to supply them with what they ask and want, should be worshipp'd, honour'd, and rever'd; and finding that no Part of the Creation is capable, besides Mankind, of paying him this Worship, and religious Honour, and Service, they cannot help concluding that it lies on them to do it, and that it is one, and a mighty End of their Creation.

'Tis probable worldly Minds will not be delighted with these Speculations, they would rather have Matter to feed than to correct their Vanity; they want Novelty even in Lessons that are intended to give a Check to their Impatience after it: And these serious Considerations will not be so agreeable to them as Instructions which are gay and galant, design'd to form their Manners for this World more than for the next. But my Intentions being to endeavour, as much as in me lies, after a Reformation in Morals, only to prepare their Minds for that Grace which is eternal; I cannot out of Complacency to the Weaknesses of Nature humour them in their Follies, nor instruct any other way than as I am myself guided, by the Scriptures, and the good Doctrine of those that preach them. By using ourselves to contemplate our Creation, and the Creation of all the wonderful Works that we behold around us, our Souls will be fill'd with the Knowledge and Belief of God, and convinc'd of the Duty of adoring him. We see so much Beauty and Excellency in every thing he has created, that we must have a Contempt for whatever is not immediately of the Hand of the great Author of Nature. Such Thoughts will lead us to the Study and Practice of Virtue, which will render us more agreeable to ourselves and the World, than the Fopperies of Air or Drefs, by which Fools endeavour to

get Distinction. Without Virtue there can be no Religion, 'tis the Foundation of it: And when we consider God in all his Excellencies, we find him in himself Eternal and Omnipotent, All-wise, and Pure and Holy; with respect to us, as all his Creatures, Just and Righteous, Merciful and Good: These are the adorable Perfections we find in this most perfect Being; and thence we may conclude, that the nearer we approach to these Perfections, the more perfect Creatures we ourselves are, and the more lov'd and valu'd by the Creator. This will naturally make us in love with those Virtues which lead us to that Degree of Perfection to which we aspire: 'Twill raise in us a Desire of being as excellent as our Nature is capable of, and rendering ourselves most acceptable to God, the Rewarder of such as endeavour to be like him. This will excite us to be pure, holy, chaste, and clean, to preserve ourselves spotless, and undefil'd, because we know this Sanctity and Innocence are a great Perfection to our Nature, and maintain the Dignity of it; whereas Pollution and Impurity degrade and sink us below ourselves, setting us on a Level with the Beasts that are void of Understanding. We know likewise this Virtue is altogether heavenly, and of the sweetest Odour before God; that it will be recompens'd by him with the most pure and undisturb'd Pleasure in Heaven, the Seat of Holiness. This will instigate us to be just and righteous to one another in all our Dealings, as our God is righteous and just; and to manage ourselves with that Fairness, that Humanity in all things, that we never reproach our own Consciences with having done to others what we would not have had them do to us. We must not set up our private Will and Humour instead of the everlasting Rule of Righteousness, nor study our Convenience and Pleasure only, without having any Regard to the Convenience and Pleasure of others.

There is indeed nothing more natural, than that every one should consult his own Benefit and Ease in the first Place; but because what belongs to *every one* is really no Privilege

Privilege to *any one*, every one must depart from his natural Right in some Cases, and submit to Rules that are unexceptionable and impartial, and favour all the World alike. The best Rule of Reason and Religion is, *To do as we wou'd be done by*: No body can escape seeing the Reasonableness of this Rule, and the Necessity of observing it to the Security of our Being, and all we possess: The closer we keep to it, the better and more perfect we are in ourselves, and the more useful to others. It gives us Preeminence above all that neglect it, and as it likens us to God himself, so nothing will render us more acceptable to him than Righteousness and Justice. These Reflexions will banish from our Minds all base and selfish Principles, they will enlarge our Souls, and make us look on those narrow and ungenerous Actions, which center all in ourselves, with Disdain. This Rectitude of Soul, which is of the Divine Essence, will keep us from offending and injuring others; and if we give no Offence, 'tis the surest way to prevent receiving any. There is hardly a Christian Virtue which has not its Reward in this Life, and did our Works end with us, it would be both for our Interest and Pleasure that they shou'd be good. How sweet is that Benignity of Mind which excites to Charity? Pity is an Excellence, and great Perfection of our Nature, and the doing good to those that stand in need of our Assistance; To pardon Affronts and Injuries, to feed the Hungry, to clothe the Naked, to visit the Sick and Imprison'd, to comfort the Distress'd, to protect the Weak and Innocent, to right the Injur'd and Oppress'd, naturally gives Men an uncontroll'd indisputable Power and Superiority. The Benefactor will be always uppermost in the Praise, Honour, and Esteem of all that see and know, as well as of all that feel his Goodness. These Considerations are however mean in comparison of that which ought to be our strongest Motive for doing Good; that by so doing we resemble most our heavenly Father, the Giver of all good things, who bestows his Favours and Blessings on

Men with this Design, that they should also favour and be kind to one another, and be themselves a Blessing to their Generation. What Promises of Reward have we from him, if we prefer the being like to him, and doing all the good we can, to any little private Interest and Advantage of our own ?

These Reflexions on Virtue are far from being a Digression from our Subject. If we can establish this of Goodness in the Minds of Men ; if we can bring them to be in love with Acts of Charity, we shall easily persuade them not to be so fond of themselves as to forget others ; not to lay out their whole Souls in studying how to decorate their Persons, and neglect the pleasant Duties of Mercy and Kindness : When the Mind is well furnish'd and adorn'd, it will have a Contempt for the Ornaments of the Body ; and next to Religion and Virtue, Wisdom and Discretion are the most amiable and desirable Graces of the Soul.

By Discretion and Wisdom is to be understood, not only the Knowledge of Virtue and Religion, which are always imply'd in them, but also an Ability of behaving ones self prudently and decently on all Occasions towards all People. It is possible to be both Righteous and Virtuous without Discretion ; but neither Virtue nor Religion are credited or promoted by those that are so : They are Good to themselves, but their Good is not at all edifying, but rather hurtful : The Extravagance of their Zeal, the indiscreet Management of their Devotion, the Indecency of their unusual Way and Gesture, are so far from inviting to Religion, that they rather excite Pity in the Wise and Good, and Scorn in the Light and Profane ; whereas a sober, unaffected, and discreet Deportment, both of Mien and Voice, in the publick Worship of God, is not only handsom and becoming in itself, but does insensibly provoke the Zeal of others : This discreet and sober Deportment is inconsistent with gaudy and wanton Drefs. How ridiculous is it to see a Lady bare to her Breasts, affecting an

an Air of Devotion, and snatching the affectionate Glances of her Eyes, from her Lover or Galant, to turn them up to Heaven? If we examin'd curiously the Looks and Behaviour of such as attend Divine Worship, what Cause shall we have to lament the Decay of true Christian Piety? We shall find some so far over-acting their Parts, that we have reason to think they are like the hir'd Mourners of ancient and modern Times, who, tho' they wept most at Funerals, were still the Persons that were least afflicted: Others on the contrary, carry themselves with so much Negligence, that one sees plainly, their Worship is much a Fashion with them as their Dress: The Bows, the Cringes, the Laughs, the Fleers, all at the same time that they pray to God to be in the midst of them, and profess to be adoring the Almighty in his immediate most holy Presence, has something so wicked and so dreadful in it, that 'tis amazing that Christians shou'd not better know what is Decency, and what is Duty; I question whether the Pagan Temples were ever defil'd with so much Levity. And this Error, as scandalous, and crying as it is, is grown so common, that if there is no other Restraint put upon it than the Fear of eternal Punishment, 'tis to be fear'd that Example will still prevail over Precept.

Many are the Virtues which lose much of their Power and Efficacy, for want of prudent and discreet Conduct. Justice may cease to be respected, when one sees a Criminal barbarously treated by either Judge or Counsel, or condemn'd with unseasonable Sarcasm, and in a Vein of Lightness, tho' his Sentence and Punishment are just. Justice thus administer'd, will have quite other Effects on the Minds of the Spectators, than it wou'd if they saw such Gravity, such Calmness, and becoming Evenness of Temper, as wou'd shew neither Displeasure at the Offender's Person, or Unconcernedness at his Offence, but a due Mixture of Zeal for the Security of Laws and Government, and of Humanity and Pity for  
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the Miserable. 'Tis the Business of Discretion to attain ones End, by Means not only just and righteous in themselves, but also well-approv'd of, and best lik'd by others, to do what shou'd and must be done, but in the most decent and most acceptable manner.

Clemency and Lenity may be so indiscreetly exercised to some Delinquents, with respect to the Manner, and so unseasonably, with respect to Time and Opportunity, that it shall rather seem a Disregard to Justice, than an Effect of Mercy and Compassion. Tho' Nature strongly inclines to Pity, yet when it is not exercis'd on a proper Object, it misses its Effects upon Mens Minds, and is neither approv'd nor prais'd. The partial Distribution of Justice being downright Sin, and its Punishment Damnation, it is not to be reckon'd among indiscreet, but among wicked Acts. When what is Merit at one time shall be criminal at another; when Offences against certain Persons are taken severe Cognisance of, and against others encourag'd and rewarded; when for the Interests or Passions of Men in Power, Men out of it are persecuted and oppress'd; this is a Crime of the blackest dye, and there can be no Virtue dwelling in Minds that are capable of it: No Ornament will become such Souls, no Splendor render their Persons amiable, no Dignity obtain them Reverence, their Cunning is so far from being discreet or prudent, that it is of the same kind, and will have the same End, with Hypocrisy and Deceit.

If Discretion gives so great Advantage to Religion and Virtue, which can bear themselves out without it, 'tis certainly necessary in Matters of less moment: It adorns and guides Conversation, it gives Grace to all we say or do, and is to be neglected in nothing: It is hard to tell how 'tis to be acquir'd; yet the want of it is sensibly to be discern'd, and appears in all the Follies and Absurdities that People commit. It is a Dexterity and Ability of behaving ones self prudently and decently, and so very useful and graceful, that it  
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ought to be one of our principal Studies; every one being the better for it themselves, and the more serviceable to others. It is perhaps defin'd to us in part by the wise Solomon, when he tells us, *There is to every thing a Season, and a time to every Purpose under Heaven; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time cast away; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.* That is, there is a Season and Time so proper and convenient for all Purposes, that they who observe it not, will infallibly fall into great Absurdities, and commit a World of Errors and Indecencies. On the contrary, they who do observe these proper Times, shall shew themselves to be wise and considerate, effect their Purposes much better, and live in more Esteem. Regard to Time is undoubtedly a necessary part of Discretion; but to that must also be join'd, a due Regard to Age and Place, Person and Quality, both with respect to ourselves and others, which reduces the general Rule of Discretion to the Article of Dress, and has been already enlarg'd upon. But we do not confine ourselves to it; it being of so absolute Necessity in all the Parts of Life, 'twou'd be absurd to neglect it for the sake of one; and wherever we introduce our Reflexions on any Virtue or Vice, it cannot be impertinent, if it tends to Improvement.

The more general and extensive our Consideration and Observation of these things are, the likelier is our Conduct to be prudent and discreet; the less Offence shall we give, and be guilty of the fewer Absurdities; the more decent, the more useful will our Conversation and Behaviour be. I have insisted the more on this, because 'tis probable, that more domestick Evils arise from want of Discretion, than want of either Virtue or Religion; and therefore in shewing how the Mind was to be adorn'd, I could not avoid adding Wisdom and Discretion to Religion and Virtue: For since the Precept enjoins, that Christian Women shou'd be good Wives,

as well as virtuous and religious, and it is their Duty to be one as well as the other; it must needs be necessary for them to provide such Qualities, as are requisite to the discharging the Duty next to Religion and Virtue: Wherefore since without a competent Share of Prudence and Discretion, it is not possible to be either good Wives, or good Mothers, or good Mistresses of Families, it is to be no little Part of their Concern to get as much of Discretion and Prudence as they can: And when they are furnished with these excellent Qualities, they will want no Lessons against Vanity of Behaviour or Dress; they will make Decency their Rule in both, and never fall into Extravagance or Impertinence.

There remains still to consider, that the Ornaments of the Mind enjoin'd by the Apostle, are to *be in that which is not corruptible*. Whatever we can possibly adorn the Body with is *corruptible*, and wears away with time; all the Beauty and Comeliness it gives is short and perishing. Sometimes it happens, that these costly Ornaments and gay Attire, are so far from adding any Beauty and Grace to the Parties, that they are rather to their Disadvantage, expose them to Derision, and deceive none but themselves. But granting they obtain their End, and render them as lovely as they would appear, how long does such a vain Delusion last, and what is the use of being so pleas'd? How many various Accidents, how many cruel Diseases, in a little time, quite destroy this Creature of the Fancy? If it 'scape these Hazards, how strangely do a few Years disguise the fairest Face? One cannot too often put the *Fair* in mind of the Folly of priding themselves in Glories which, like that of the Lily, so soon fade and die away. So useless, so fantastick, so transient a thing as Beauty, cannot be worth the Care, and Pains, and Cost that People are at about it. The Praise and Pleasure of it while it lasts is inconsiderable and empty, and when 'tis gone, as it is quickly gone, it leaves either Shame or Grief, or both, to such as have over-rated it while they had it, and valued themselves upon

upon that weak account ; they are punish'd in some Proportion to the vain Esteem they held themselves in.

But the *Mind*, when that is cultivated and improv'd, answers sufficiently for all the care, and time, and pains, that are bestow'd upon it. The Ornaments of that are such, as always obtain the End propos'd by them : They always represent it beautiful and lovely to all People : It does not depend upon the Humour or Fancy, whether Religion, Virtue, and Discretion, shall find Favour and Acceptance, for they will always find their Force irresistible ; while Men have Reason and Understanding, they cannot help approving and desiring these Accomplishments of the Soul : We may in this case trust them with their Passions ; for tho' their own Practice be against them, guided by their inordinate Desires, yet is their secret Judgment always on the side of Religion, Virtue, and Discretion ; and they always like them in others, how much soever they neglect them in themselves. The loosest People in the World, wou'd have their Mothers, their Wives, their Daughters, their Sisters, and all their Relations, Religious, Virtuous and Discreet, rather than Beautiful ; and therefore 'tis the settled Judgment of Mankind, that these are the best, the truest, and most lasting Ornaments of Women. Indeed when Beauty also meets and joins with these excellent Qualities, they give a natural Lustre to each other, and set each other off to great Advantage : Beauty adds Grace to them, and they present the greatest Beauty yet more beautiful. But these are Ornaments when that is gone, and where it never was ; these are incorruptible, and last as long as the Mind itself, which they adorn and beautify ; these are of great Use and Service ; these deserve the greatest Praise and Honour, and these will stand them in stead when all things else fail them. All Beauty and external Ornaments are of very little Use and Service, either to such as have them, or to such as behold them ; whereas Religion, Virtue, and Discretion, are of general Use and Benefit ; they are serviceable to every one : They do not  
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only make those who possess them good, but they make them do good to all that are concern'd, or have to deal with them. Beauty, Wit, Birth, Quality, and fine Attire attract the Eyes and Admiration; but 'tis another sort of Admiration; which is rais'd by Virtue and Religion; 'tis always attended with Esteem and secret Veneration, the other with Envy, or perhaps Contempt: For if Men see we are too vain, and puffed up with Conceit for either Beauty, Wit, Birth, Quality, or fine Attire, they will refuse us the Superiority we would usurp, and look with Disdain on what we expect they should admire. The Admiration rais'd by those outward Qualities as excellent as they are in themselves, is only a transient Wonder; something that glitters and dazzles the Eyes; a fine Sight, which works on the Fancy a little, and then gives way to other Novelties, that still occasions the same Wonder: But the Admiration rais'd by the true Ornaments of the Mind, Religion, Virtue and Discretion, is from the Contemplation of some great and noble Work of Nature, which by its Beauty and its Usefulness begets Esteem and Liking in the Mind immediately; a Liking and Esteem that continues there, and are excited as often as the Object or Idea of it rises or appears. There is therefore no Comparison between the Usefulness of Beauty and the Ornaments of the Body, and those good Qualities and Graces that are the Ornaments and Beauties of the Soul. Nor is there any Comparison between the Praises, Honour and Esteem, that all good, wise, and sober People give, and have, for virtuous and religious Women; and that short Gaze and Compliment which vain and idle Spirits pay to Beauty and gay Clothes. *Favour, says one that knew, is deceitful, and Beauty is vain, but a Woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised.* Favour and Beauty have their Praise, vain and deceitful as they are, bestow'd with the mischievous Purpose of ensnaring and corrupting: But they who fear the Lord in Wisdom and Virtue, are prais'd in earnest, and honour'd and esteem'd with all Sincerity.

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There can be no Difficulty, therefore, in the Choice of these different Ornaments and Beauties ; the one are vain and useless, the other solid and serviceable ; the one belov'd and had in Veneration by all good People, the other valued for a time by the Young and Giddy ; the one will stand those that have them in stead, when the other fail them and are gone. The Favour and Affection, which are only built upon good Features, Colour, Shape, Dress, and Ornament, must necessarily decay and die. This Affection depends upon Diseases, Accidents and Humour for its Being. Can this be sufficient to secure the Peace and Happiness of marry'd Women, who have it not in their Power to secure themselves against Diseases, Accidents, and Change of Humour ? If their Happiness consisted in such Affection, how precarious, dependent, and uncertain wou'd it be ? Certain it is, they cannot be happy without Affection and Good-will, which are necessary to make them easy and contented as long as they live, much longer than they can hold their Beauty and their Comeliness. They are oblig'd then in common Prudence, to secure the Affections of their Husbands, by adorning themselves with those good Qualities, that will render them for ever acceptable to wise and sober Men, even when the Ruins of their Beauty are defaced. These Qualities are Godliness, Virtue, and Discretion ; where-ever they appear there will be no want of any thing else, or if there be, these will excuse it or supply it. Where Men discern a good Sense of Religion, prevailing in their Minds, and influencing them to the Exercise of all the Virtues that are proper to them, according to their Opportunities and Abilities ; where they see them manage their Affairs with Care, Wisdom, and Discretion, and discharge the Duties of every Relation, whether Mother, Wife, or Mistress of a Family, with Diligence and Prudence, they will despise the Entertainments of a light and idle Imagination ; they will see no want of Beauty in the Body, where the Soul shines out with so much Lustre ; the Accomplishments

plishments of the Mind will so charm them, that they will be blind to all other Imperfections; they will find the Use and Pleasure of the excellent Qualities of the Soul in every Action of their Lives; it will be a Comfort to them in their Affliction, and a Joy in Prosperity, 'twill give Grace and Comeliness throughout, hide every native Blemish, and what is infinitely more than rendering them amiable in the Eyes of Men, it will give them Grace and Favour in the Sight of God, which is to be their principal Aim. For what wou'd it avail them to be amiable to all the World, if under God's Displeasure? To be in favour with God is the surest way to be in favour with Man: Good-will is one of the Blessings he showers down on his Favourites, and there is no Means of obtaining that Felicity but by Religion and Virtue.

One wou'd think by the Conduct of the modish Ladies, that they flatter'd themselves with a Belief of being what the Folly of fond Men call them, *Goddeffes*, and their Being and Beauty immortal, that Sicknefs and Death durst not approach them; but the time will come, and perhaps shortly too, when they who have mis-spent their Life in these or other idle and unprofitable Exercises, tho' not directly sinful, when they have neglected to improve their better Part, to dress up and adorn their Souls, to clothe themselves with Virtues and good Works, shall see their Crime, and how naked and defenceless they shall stand before the Throne of God, where they are to give an Account how they have pass'd their Lives in this World: They who have been virtuous and holy, constant and fervent in their Prayers and Praises, frequent in reading of the Scriptures, and other good Books, in meditating on the Promises and Threats they find in them, and who have all along been careful to be rich in good Works, busied in the Exercise of Virtue, and constantly doing the several Duties of their Life, shall find the Advantage of having thus improv'd their Time, their Talents, and Abilities; they shall see that this was *trimming of their Lamps*, and  
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living in a Readiness and Expectation of the Bridegroom's calling them; that this was the adorning of *the bidden Man of the Heart, which was not corruptible, and is in the Sight of God of great Price.*

If a Christian Woman wou'd demand of her own Conscience, when she is consuming Hours at her Glass, and contriving how to prepare herself for the unchaste Glances of wanton Spectators: Is this the *Trimming* which the wise Virgins adorn'd themselves with? Shou'd I meet the heavenly Bridegroom in these Garments, so dispos'd to tempt and to be tempted, shou'd I not be condemn'd with the foolish Virgins? And what is that Condemnation, but eternal Torment? she wou'd surely shorten the Time she set apart for Vanity, and give more to the adorning her Soul with Ornaments of Religion and Virtue, and especially with that of a *meek and quiet Spirit*, which the Apostle tells is most becoming and precious *in the Sight of God.* By this *meek and quiet Spirit* is to be understood a soft and gentle Temper, a peaceful calm, and patient Mind, oppos'd to Anger, Pride, and Fierceness, Noisiness, Impatience, and a restless Discontent. This kind of Temper is the greatest Happiness that can befall any one, making them easy to themselves, and to all about them. Most of the Troubles and Misfortunes of Life are more or less uneasy and afflicting, as their Minds are more or less prepar'd to entertain them. Thus we see the same Evil that oppresses and overwhelms one Man, makes very little Impressions upon another; one Man grows loud and passionate on the least Occasion, a look of Slight, a doubtful or an angry Word sets him immediately in a Flame, while another bears the most apparent Insults, and heaviest Injuries, with great Evenness and Patience; one Man is calm and easy under great Losses, while another storms and rages at little Disappointments. A meek and quiet Spirit therefore, does most evidently give the Advantage to such as have it, and deliver them from many Sufferings, to which the Fierce and Angry,  
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Hasty and Impatient, are subject. This renders it the most desirable Temper that can be, in a Life that is the Scene of so much certain Misery and Trouble.

The best Qualities of the Mind are deprav'd and corrupted by Custom and Fashion. Vapours and Spleen are now affected as much as Gaiety and Wit. Ladies are afraid of being thought Fools if they are good-natur'd, and fancy they are never so witty as when they are splenetick, and out of Humour with every thing and every body about them; they seem to study the Scriptures, to act quite contrary to the Rules of them. Instead of the hidden Ornaments of the Heart, all their Thought and Care is to set themselves off with the outward Ornaments of the Body; instead of a meek and quiet Spirit, they are for a peevish and froward one. There is no greater Sign that Modes are of the Devil's Invention, than that they are generally opposite to the Laws of God, and that almost all Fashions have a Tendency to Evil, whether in Dress or Manners.

It may be objected that a meek and quiet Spirit is not a thing to be acquir'd, but the Gift of God, and what we bring into the World with us, if we have it at all. How then can we be exhorted to get it, since it is not to be got by us, but to be born with us? Every one allows it to be very desirable, if nature had been so gracious to him as to make it a part of their Being. It must be acknowledg'd that the Seeds and Principles of all our Passions and Humours are born with us, and there is generally a Predominancy of some one Humour, that from our Infancy bears Sway above the rest, that shews itself conspicuously, and peculiarly marks out a Man *so temper'd*. 'Tis also sure, that this mechanical Propensity of Nature is not by any Care or Pains, by any Art or Diligence, to be quite extinguish'd, or intirely chang'd in Education; there will be always a Bias to that Side, as all Men feel; but 'tis as sure that Care and Pains, Art, Diligence and Time, Custom and good Consideration will go a very great way to the chang-  
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ing and correcting any Temper. *Use*, we say with Reason enough, *is a second Nature*, and we see People by habituating themselves do almost become what they will; wherefore tho' they have it not in their Power to change their Tempers intirely, yet they always have it in their power to change them as far as they are requir'd to do it, as far as he enables them by Reason and Use to prevent all the mischievous Effects that flow from them; not to indulge themselves in Frowardness, Peevishness, or fly out into Passion and Rage, but always to have a Guard on their Spirit, to keep it quiet, that it may be in *the Sight of God of great Price*. Men and Women are not requir'd to put off their natural Temper, and put on a new one presently, but so to govern themselves as to be quiet and meek on all Occasions; to restrain themselves by Reason and Consideration from falling into Bitterness, Impatience, Mutiny, and Clamour, not to take delight in teizing and vexing one another, nor study to find out trivial Occasions of Quarrel; not to chide their Servants for Trifles, and to shew their Authority, but to be calm in all things, and easy to all.

Many are the cross perverse Accidents which will happen in the course of their Lives, many Disappointments, many Provocations will they meet with, severe Trials must they go through, and if they do not arm themselves against them, with a patient and prudent Spirit, their Sufferings will be almost double on their Heads. Now they are not called upon to be insensible and stupid under what befalls them, but so to prepare and behave themselves, that they may do nothing which mis-becomes them, in which they are to exercise their Reason and best Abilities. These are the Proofs of their Obedience Patience and Discretion. The Doctrine of Obedience is not easily to be taught, to such as have been flatter'd with the foolish Adoration of those, to whom when they marry they vow it: Women seem to look upon it as Words of Form, and  
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not as taken out of the Scripture to be put into the Service of Matrimony : Some openly disown it, others refuse to practise it ; many look upon it as Usurpation, and many more treat it as a Jest, few there are that regard it as a Command, the Breach of which is a Sin, and the Punishment of all Sin, Death eternal. No wonder those that will not obey their Husbands, are so impatient under the least Disobedience or Negligence of Servants and Children, that they are never easy but when they are exerting their Superiority ; but they would do well to consider, that Matters are seldom mended with them, by all the Noise and Contention that is rais'd ; they are often made worse, but seldom better, neither the Folly nor Perverseness of Men are cur'd, nor any unlucky Accidents remedy'd, by Impatience and Fury. Things which of themselves would have done but little Hurt, do, by indiscreet and hasty Management, become the Occasions of great Mischief. Sometimes for a small inconsiderable Matter they fall into such Excess of Anger and Disorder, that they hazard by it all the Peace and Quiet of their Lives, even the Affection of their Husbands, of which they ought to be most tender, knowing their Happiness must end when that is alienated from them. The Mischiefs that have been occasioned by the Perverseness and Petulancy of some Wives are inconceivable ; it has run some Husbands on Excess of Drinking, *to drive*, as they call it, *their Cares away*. Foolish Men ! their Cares return with double Bitterness, and the Potion, tho' never so often repeated, no longer cures than it drowns them. Other Husbands are put upon seeking in other Women that Good-nature which they cannot find in their Wives, and by a criminal Passion destroy a vexatious one : Some grow to Fury, and lose the Respect and Tenderness due to the Sex : Others despise the Folly of those Wives that cannot be quiet themselves, and therefore will let no body else be quiet near them ; they mind not their Ill-humours, and by their Contempt add Fuel  
to

to the Flame, for nothing feeds it more than to see it has no Effect. How often have Women wept with despite, that their Husbands would not be angry with them? Is this termagant Spirit becoming Christians? If a meek and quiet one *is of great Price in God's Sight*, what must this turbulent and furious one be, but one of those evil things which the Lord abhors, and which he will surely punish to all Eternity?

Having consider'd these things so amply, and in their full Extent, let us from these Considerations proceed to others, to *direct us in leading a devout Life*.

Suppress all vain Complacency in looking in the Glass, all unnecessary Niceness and Curiosity; if you perceive such vain Thoughts stealing upon you, turn them into Praise, that God has given you a comely Body, desire it may not be an Occasion of Sin in yourself or others. If you are less beautiful, be not peevish or repining; take care to secure a happy Resurrection, you will then be perfect in Body and Soul. Sanctify this, and all your Actions, with holy Ejaculations, that all may be to the Glory of God, and converted from common to religious Uses.

Observe a decent Frugality, the better to enable you for Acts of Charity. Let your Behaviour be strictly modest, following no Fashion inconsistent with it.

Whatever has been said, that all Actions should begin with an actual Intention of offering it up to God, it is not to be understood to be so absolutely necessary, that to omit it is a Sin; only our habitual Intention should be for his Glory, and all other things be consider'd as conducive to a spiritual Life.

By no means intangle your Conscience with Disquiet on every Omission or Forgetfulness, which the Hurry of Business, great Intenseness of Study, Conversation, &c. may often occasion.

Redeem the Time by Discourse of Virtue and Religion.

Be not too long in Eating and Dressing.

*Dives,*

*Dives*, we read, was clothed in Purple, and yet *Lazarus* was not reliev'd; and needless Excess devour'd the Supply of his real Wants, leaving no Ability perhaps to do it, had he been willing.

We do not find that *Dorcas's* Garments are mention'd, but the Widows.

Give no more Time to Dress than to the Service of God.

### A P R A Y E R.

**O** My God, give me Grace not to consume that on vain Superfluities, which is due to the Necessities of thy Creatures: Let me not stop at Justice: Give me Grace to be charitable, and to subtract something from my own lawful Portion, out of Love to thee and my Neighbour, that so I may in some measure supply their Wants, and cause many Thanksgivings unto thee, thro' Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lest some over-scrupulous People should be apt, from what has been said, to raise vain Terrors to themselves concerning Apparel, it is convenient to remove them, as well as to prevent the falling into the contrary Extremity.

We are not to conclude that all rich and gay Attire is alike forbidden to all Ages and Qualities, for Christ himself tells us, *Those who are in King's Houses are clothed in soft Raiment*. Reason seems to allow a Disparity in Dress, as God allows a Difference in Possessions; nevertheless the Command against Extravagance and Wantonness in it, shou'd be more regarded than it generally is. Instead of using these outward Ornaments with Sobriety, how many bestow that Time in clothing the Body which they owe to the adorning of the Mind? and that Money on vain Superfluities, which is due not only to the Necessities of the Miserable, but to the Support of their Family and Children? The Mistress of the House often shines in her Gold and Pearl, while her Children and Family are in Want and Raggs;  
and

and the Master is forc'd to lay out those Sums in Watches, Necklaces, Brocades, and the like, which ought to be paid to his impatient Creditors. Not only Time is wasted, and Wealth consumed, but the Mind is filled with fantastick Images, by which the Devotions and Conversations of Women are infected. Such Solicitousness about Dress is more suitable to those unhappy and wretched Women whose Beauty is set to sale, than to those who make Profession of Religion, whose End in Clothing shou'd be Cleanness and Decency: If marry'd, the pleasing their Husbands, join'd with a due Regard to their Age and Degree. But those who adorn themselves to attract the Eyes and Admiration of the Unwary, lay Snares for themselves as well as others, and it is just if they fall into them. Such shall be answerable not only for their own Sins, but for all that they willingly occasion in others.

## A P R A Y E R.

**O** My God, since thou hast been pleas'd to keep me from Deformity, let not the Devil pollute my Heart, and make me all Rottenness within. Keep my Mind pure, that evil Thoughts may never lodge within me; that I may find a Loathing, not a Complacency, in all unclean Imaginations or filthy Communications; much more in all sinful and unhallowed Actions. What greater Glory can I desire from my outward Comeliness, than to be a Temple for thy Holy Spirit? had I yet a more curious Case, it wou'd be too mean for so bright a Jewel as a Soul sanctify'd by Grace. I desire no other Triumphs, than to be thy Servant; and if such outward Advantages may make my Religion appear better, and bring greater Glory to my Maker, I rejoice in it. But, Lord, I pray thee, never let my outward Comeliness be a Snare or Cause of Sin to myself or others. Amen.

The King's daughter was all beautiful within: If I want outward Beauty I only want what is often a Temptation; and if I am contented with this Defect, I practise an Act of Virtue which the more Beautiful cannot.

*Submit, O my Soul, to this Amusement, as a Punishment of Sin: For Sin was the great Deformity that introduc'd all others into the World. At the Resurrection, if thou risest in Grace, all these bodily Deformities, the Marks of Sin, shall be done away, and the most pure and perfect Soul have the most bright and glorify'd Body.*

Much have we to do, much to learn, and no Time to lose; do not therefore spend so precious a Treasure on so poor an Improvement as adorning the outward Man, and neglecting the hidden Man of the Heart. Redeem what you can to improve your Mind, or to other necessary Duties; so shall you suppress vain Complacencies, and a needless Delicacy. Remember 'tis a Sin and Shame to give Hours to Dress, and to think half a one long in Prayer.

In considering this Subject, it is probable some of these Considerations may have been urg'd more than once: and the Evil is come to such a Height, that a Reformation cannot be too much prest; nor the Duties of avoiding Vanity, and improving Time, be too much insisted upon. What says Wisdom itself?

*I beheld among the simple Ones a young Man void of Understanding; And behold there met him a Woman with the Attire of an Harlot, and subtle of Heart.*

How it is that wicked Women adorn themselves, we read in the Story of *Jezabel*, who hearing *Jehu* was come to *Jezreel*, painted her Face, and tired her Head. *Dinah* was beautiful, and what Evil did her Beauty occasion? How was *David* ensnar'd by the Beauty of *Bathsheba*? That Man after God's own Heart, was so far bewitch'd by it, as to run at once into the damnable Sins of Murder and Adultery. How often has the beautiful Mask gilded the otherwise deform'd Vice of Impurity? Learn that quiet and meek Spirit, that Modesty and Humility in all your Actions, and especially in your Dress, which becomes the Religion you profess: *After this manner*, says the Apostle, *in the old Time, the holy Women also who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own Husbands.*



## CHASTITY.

**O**F all the Christian Virtues, there is none that shews the Dignity and Power of the Soul so much as *Chastity*: 'Tis a Triumph over a Desire which Nature has imprinted in the Heart of Man, fierce and unruly, full of false Hopes and imaginary Delights, which too often blinds the Understanding, and leads to Destruction. Chastity suppresses whatever is unlawful in this Passion; and all Desire is unlawful, which is not warranted by Marriage, which is not within the Order of Nature, and the Moderation of Christian Modesty.

This is a very tender Subject, and is hardly to be touch'd upon without giving Offence. *Fornication* is of late soften'd by the gentle Name of *Gallantry*. The *Whoremonger*, whom God will judge and condemn, is now the *galant Man*; and the *Adulterer*, whose Portion shall be in the Lake that burns with eternal Fire, glories in his Adulteries, as if they were not so many Triumphs over Innocence and Virtue. The hidden Sins of both Sexes are not fit to be expos'd to light; they are too well known, and too commonly practis'd, to need any Explanation: But let all voluntary Polluters of themselves know that they must be judg'd for those their secret Pollutions, by a Judge who tries the Heart, and whose all-searching Eye nothing can escape. Thanks be to God, as wicked as we are, there are Sins of this kind which are unknown to us, or if known, held in Detestation. All unnatural Lusts are abhorr'd, and incestuous Enjoyments seldom or never heard of. 'Tis the infinite Mercy of God that keeps us, by his restraining Grace, from these detested and damnable Crimes:

Wou'd the same infinite Mercy purify our Hearts as he is pure, and cleanse 'em of all Lust, we shou'd have equal Abhorrence for all Impurity, and excuse none on account of the Degree of it.

The immoderate Use, even of lawful Love, is one of those irregular Desires which is suppress'd by Chastity. The same Judgment is to be made in this, as concerning Meats and Drinks, there being no certain Degree prescrib'd to all Persons, but it is to be rul'd, as the other Actions of Men, by proportion to the End. Let us in all of them have in remembrance, that we shou'd in every thing have the Glory of God in view, and we shall never abuse the Liberty of the Nuptial Bed, nor turn a chaste Passion into Lust. *For this is the Will of God, as St. Paul tells us, even our Sanctification, that we shou'd abstain from Fornication, that every one of us shou'd know how to possess his Vessel in Sanctification and Honour, not in the Lust of Concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.*

Chastity is either Abstinence or Continence. Abstinence is that of Virgins or Widows, Continence of marry'd Persons. Chaste Marriages are honourable and pleasing to God; Widowhood is pitiable in its Solitariness and Loss, but amiable and comely when it is adorn'd with Gravity and Purity, not sully'd with the Remembrances of past Enjoyments, nor with the present Desires of a second Bed.

A Virgin Life gives us an Image of charming Ease and spotless Innocence, when it is blest with a just Contempt of those Carnal Delights, that are apt to bury the Soul too much in the Senses; when it is not disturb'd with Desires of Change, and is always happy in full Content with its present Condition. The vow'd Virginity of People in Cloisters, is capable indeed of very pious Representations: But as those Vows are generally constrain'd, or if sometimes taken by Choice, are as often afterwards repented of: So those only who build too much on Appearances, on outward Works, and not on the Sincerity of the Mind, the only Sacrifice  
that's

that's pleasing to God ; those only who run their Devotion to Idolatry, and their Zeal to Superstition, can be lavish in the Praise of it. A voluntary Virginity, where the Person chooses it to be intirely devoted to the Service of God, is certainly commendable, when it does not incapacitate the Person from answering other Duties of Life : Not that a Virgin State is more holy *than a marry'd* one, in any thing, but that it has more Opportunities to be holy, is less incumber'd with Cares, and has more time to converse with God. Some Persons better please him in a marry'd State, than Virgins in their Virginity ; by giving great Examples of Conjugal Affection, by preserving their Faith unbroken, by educating their Children in his Fear, by Patience, and Contentedness, and the Exercise of the Virtues proper to it. Such do not only please God, but do it in a higher Degree than those Virgins, whose Piety is not answerable to their greater Advantages and Opportunities : Especially if their Virginity is the Effect of Niceness, Pride, or Avarice. If they keep it because they cou'd not sell it at their own Price, or value it so high that they think none worthy of it. This Virginity will always be attended with Peevishness and Sullenness, and render such Persons as ill qualify'd for religious Duties, as the most anxious Cares of the World. In a word, every State of Life, whether of Marriage, or Widowhood, or Virginity, is of itself alike virtuous and innocent. Every one has its particular Advantages, and to say which is most holy, is to circumscribe the Divine Grace, which can make every State to be alike pure and holy, and without it there can be no Purity and Holiness.

If we consider the equal Consequences of Lust and Uncleaness both as to this World and the next, we shall avoid all Filthiness of the Flesh, and endeavour to live chastly, temperately, justly, and religiously. The Obscenity of it appears in nothing more than the Shame it is attended with : It chooses Night and Dark-

ness, and trembles at the approach of Light. *The Eye of the Adulterer waiteth for the Twilight, saying, no Eye shall see me, and disguiseth his Face: In the Dark they dig through Houses, which they had mark'd for themselves in the Day-time: They know not the Light, for the Morning is to them as the Shadow of Death. He is swift as the Waters, their Portion is cursed in the Earth, he beholdeth not the Way of the Vineyards; Shame is the eldest Daughter of Uncleannefs.* A very lively Description of the lewd Intrigues of the Children of Lust. Night is the Season of Murder and Adultery, which are often Companions; and if the latter is not stain'd with Blood, it is always in fear of spilling it or having it spilt. Conscience awakens sometimes the most harden'd of these Sinners; but the Temptation soon stifles all its Motions, whereas those of Religion and Virtue are stifled.

Did we reflect a little on the Cares and Troubles that attend the Appetites of Uncleannefs, that its Fruition is Sorrow and Repentance, that *the way of the Adulterer is hedg'd with Thorns*, that it is full of Fears and Jealousies, burning Desires, impatient Waitings, tediousness of Delay, suffering of Affronts, and confusion of Discovery, it would certainly give an Horror for a Sin, which is so fatal in its Effects and its Punishment. Most of its kinds are of that Nature, that they involve the Ruin of two Souls: The Fornicator or Adulterer steals the Soul, as well as injures the Body of his Neighbour: They are the Instruments the common Enemy of Mankind makes use of to people his infernal World: How often have such Wretches sunk from the lawless Embraces of Harlots and Adultresses to the bottomless Pit, from whence there is no Rescue, nor no Companions but of the Accurs'd, and *the Worm which never dies*. Indeed there is no Consideration, moral or divine, which does not warn us to detest the Sin of Whoredom, which has a profess'd Enmity against the Body itself; *Every Sin which a Man doth is without the Body, but he that committeth Fornication sinneth against his own Body.*

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It is contrary to the Spirit of Government, by debasing the Spirit of a Man, rendring him soft and effeminate, without Courage or Confidence. *David* felt this after his Folly with *Bathsheba*; he fell to unkingly Acts and Stratagems to elude the Crime; and he did nothing but increase it; he remain'd timorous and poor-spirited, 'till he pray'd to God to restore him to his former Boldness and Vigour of Mind. He order'd *Uriah* to be plac'd in the Front of the Battle, to give him by his Death the entire Enjoyment of his Wife; the first Act that follow'd his Uncleanness, was the Murder of a brave Man, his Rival: *Should we not, O God, be in continual Fears of a Sin capable of putting so good and great a Prince on so base and so bloody an Action? How can we resist Temptation without a double Portion of thy Grace, as when the Light of thy Countenance has not so shin'd?* We find Arguments against Uncleanness in the New Testament, which cou'd not be us'd in the Old. Indeed Chastity is a Duty, which was mystically intended by God in the Law of Circumcision; but in the Sacrament of Baptism we receive the Holy Spirit, and our Bodies are made living Temples of the Holy Ghost, in which he dwells; and therefore Uncleanness is Sacrilege, and defiles a Temple of the living God. *Know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost? And he that defiles a Temple, him will God destroy? Therefore glorify God in your Bodies, that is, flee Fornication:* To which, for the likeness of the Argument, we may add, that our Bodies are Members of Christ, and *God forbid that we shou'd take the Members of Christ, and make them the Members of Harlots.* Thus then Uncleanness dishonours Christ, and dishonours the Holy Spirit: It is a Sin against God, and in this Sense a Sin against the Holy Ghost.

These are Arguments us'd by Divines, who are our best Guides in Matters where our own Judgments are apt to be bias'd by the Flesh. They add, with respect to Adultery, "That Marriage is by Christ hallow'd  
" into a Mystery, to signify the sacramental and my-

“ fical Union of Chrift and his Church; he therefore  
 “ who breaks the Knot, which the Church and their  
 “ mutual Faith have ty’d, and Chrift has knit up into  
 “ a Myftery, difhonours a great Rite of Chriftianity,  
 “ of high, fpiritual, and excellent Signification.” The  
 Church of *Rome*, which turns all her Worſhip into Idolatry, turns this Contraſt into a Sacrament; but tho’ we muſt not pay it ſuch Idolatrous Reverence, we muſt look upon it as a ſacred Vow, ſolemnly made before God, whom we call’d to witneſs before the Congregation, and who has denounc’d a thouſand Woes, both here and hereafter, againſt thoſe that break it.

Uncleannefs is the Parent of Blindneſs of Mind, Inconfideration, Precipitancy, or Giddineſs in Actions, Self-love, Hatred of God, Love of preſent Pleaſures, a Deſpite or Deſpair of the Joys of Religion and Heaven; whereas a pure Mind in a chaſte Body, is the Mother of Wiſdom and Deliberation, ſober Counſel and ingenuous Actions, open Deportment and ſweet Carriage, ſincere Principles and unprejudic’d Underſtanding, Love of God and Self-denial, Peace and Confidence, holy Prayers, and ſpiritual Comforts, a Joy of Spirit infinitely greater than the carnal and fleeting Joys of Unchaſtity: *For to overcome Pleaſure is the greateſt Pleaſure, and no Victory is greater than that which is got over our Luſts and filthy Inclinations.*

Common Honesty, methinks, is of itſelf ſufficient to prevent us from falling into the Sins of Fornication and Adultery; and common Shame, enough to deter Men from giving way to ſo beaſtly an Appetite; How are ſuch abhorr’d by all ſober and religious Perſons? they are pointed at as ſo many ugly Monſters; and while the Adulterers and Whoremongers pride it perhaps in their own Imaginations, that they have made Conqueſt of their Neighbours Wives and Daughters, all good People look upon them as the Scandal and Peſts of Mankind. In Scripture we read, that *Abimelech* made it Death for the Men of *Gerar* to meddle with the Wife  
 of

of *Isaac*, and *Judah* condemn'd *Thamar* to be burnt for her Adultery. Besides the Law made to put the adulterous Person to death, God constituted a settled and constant Miracle to discover the Adultery of a suspected Woman, *that her Bowels shou'd burst with drinking the Waters of Jealousy*. All Nations, barbarous and civil, agree in a general Detestation of so dishonest and shameful a Crime. Several Attempts have been made in our own Country to destroy it: The *Puritans* were for punishing it with Death, and a Law had like to have past some Years since to the same good Purpose: But to our Shame be it spoken, the Crime was too general, the Offenders too great, and not the Nation too merciful; for God forbid, that those who with Pleasure see daily poor Criminals carry'd to the Gallows for little Thefts and Robberies, shou'd be griev'd to see those punish'd with Death, that had robb'd whole Families of their Peace, and Honour, and Estates, by bringing into them Bastardy and Infamy.

The middle Ages of the Church were not pleas'd that the Adulterers shou'd be put to Death; as the Church grew more degenerate, the Manners of Christians grew also more deprav'd: But in the Primitive Ages, the Civil Laws, by which they were then govern'd, gave leave to the injur'd Husband to kill his adulterous Wife, if he took her in the Fact. The Partiality of this Law to Men having caus'd an Enquiry, *Whether is worse the Adultery of the Man or the Woman?* let us examine that Question: In doing which we must observe, that, *in respect to the Person*, the Fault is greater in a Man than a Woman, who is of a more pliant and easy Spirit, of a weaker Understanding, and has nothing to supply the unequal Strengths of Men but the Defence of a passive Nature, and the Armour of Modesty, the natural Ornament of that Sex. *It is unjust*, said the good Emperor *Antoninus*, *that Men shou'd demand Chastity and Severity from his Wife, which himself will not observe towards her*. But this Injustice is become so common, that if Adul-

tery is still reckon'd a Sin towards God, yet Men are far from having Remorse of Conscience for it, as it is an Injury to their Wives; tho' to exact Chastity of them, and not practise it themselves, is as if a Man shou'd persuade his Wife to fight against those Enemies to which he had yielded himself a Prisoner.

*Now, in respect of the evil Consequences of Adultery, it is worse in a Woman than a Man, as bringing Bastardy into a Family, Disinherisons, and great Injuries to the lawful Children, infinite Violations of Peace, Murders, Divorces, and all the Effects of Rage and Madness. In respect of the Crime, and as relating to God, they are equal, intolerable, and damnable. It is no more permitted to Men to have many Wives, than to Women to have many Husbands; in this respect they have the same Privileges, and their Sin is the same. Adulterous Persons were refused the holy Communion by the Ancient Church, 'till they had done seven Years Penance in Fasting and Sackcloth, in severe Infiictions, and Instruments of Chastity and Sorrow, according to the Discipline of those Ages.*

How many are now admitted daily to that Blessed Ordinance, who boast of their Adultery, and glory in their Filthiness? How many do our Laws oblige to this Communion of Saints, or to renounce the Provisions of Life? The Sin of those that take it unworthily must lie in part at their Doors who lay so violent a Temptation, as is Bread, in their way. Where is the Purity, the Severity of the ancient Discipline? How is the Sacrament of the Body of Christ prostituted to mean and mercenary Uses? Is the Adulterer forbidden to approach it? Is the sacred Cup taken from the foul Hand of the Whoremonger? Are Communicants so examin'd as to intend a thorough Inquiry into their Preparedness to sit at the Table of the Lord? Or are not the open Whoremonger and Adulterer taken on their own Credit, because the Law has enjoin'd them to communicate or starve? I must confess I think of this  
most

most Holy Ordinance with so much Reverence, that I cannot without trembling consider what Herds of adulterous Beasts have the glorious privilege of the Elect and Chosen of God.

Having treated of the Virtue of Chastity, with respect to its opposite Lust, let us reflect on its proper Offices, and in what that Grace and Duty is exercised.

We must resist all unclean Thoughts, and not indulge our Fancies with Uncleaness, tho' possibly it may not always inflame Desire. We must never humour ourselves with fantastick Notions of Love; for tho' either by Shame, Impatience, or want of Opportunity, we may be restrain'd from the Act, it will not be our Faults that the Sin was not committed; the Mind is as criminal as the Body, and our Punishment will be the same.

Have a chaste Eye and a chaste Hand, it being all one with what part of the Body we commit Adultery. If a Man lets his Eye loose, and enjoys the Lust of it, he's an Adulterer. *Look not on a Woman to lust after her;* wanton Glances will create lewd Wishes and Ideas, and supposing all the Members to be restrain'd, yet if the Eye be permitted to lust, a Man can no otherwise be called chaste than he can be called severe and mortify'd, who sits all Day seeing Plays and Revellings, and out of Greediness to fill his Eye neglects his Belly. There are some Vessels, which, if you offer to lift by the bottom, you cannot stir them, but are soon remov'd if you take them by the Ears. It matters not with which of your Members you are carry'd from your Duty. The sure Consequence of all wanton Dalliance is Desire, and if you refrain from the Act it will not be out of Fear of God, but Fear of Man, of yourself, or others. Had you fear'd God, you wou'd not have run into Temptation; and the Pleasure you take in gazing on and lusting after a beautiful Woman, carries as much Guilt with it as her Embraces. For 'tis not Virtue that restrains you from them, but Necessity; you cou'd not enjoy any more, therefore you did not; you wou'd not,  
because

because a stronger Passion, Terror, at that time, master'd you; God was not all that while in your Heart. Can you say that your Heart and Mind were Chaste? Did you detest all Uncleannefs? Did you check the Motions the tempting Objects inspir'd? If it was not thus with you, you are as much a Whoremonger and Adulterer, as much lies upon you to be repented of, as if your whole Body had been involv'd in the Crime. To detest Uncleannefs, to dislike its Motions, past Actions, Circumstances, Discourses, ought to be the Chastity of Virgins and Widows, of old Persons and Eunuchs especially, and generally of all Men according to their several Necessities. Filthy Discourse is a great Inflamer of Lust. Avoid all Indecencies of Language with a great Care; keep the Tongue chaste, good Manners has banish'd this Impurity from Conversation. It as much mis-becomes a Gentleman as a Christian to accustom himself, or allow himself in the Language of the Stews: But that's but a poor Consideration, in comparison of the Presence we should always remember we are in, that of the All-hearing and All-seeing God.

Temptations to Lust are of too prevailing a Nature to be disputed with: Do not think to reason yourselves out of them, when the very Workings of the Mind in all such Disputes serve to create Desire; Passion will be too strong for your Arguments; you will soon give up a Cause you wish to lose. Fly, therefore, all Temptation; think not at all of it; drive it immediately out of your Head with Religion or Business. If the Mind has not conquer'd Lust, the Resistance from the Body will be but very weak; 'tis an Enemy that is to be treated otherwise than with direct War and Contention: If you hear it speak, it ruins you, and the very Arguments you go about to answer, leave a Relish upon the Tongue. A Man may be burnt if he goes near the Fire, tho' but to quench his House; and by handling Pitch, tho' but to take it from your Clothes, you defile your Fingers. Besides to argue with Temptation shews a Pleasure in being

being tempted ; if you had such an abhorrence for the Sin as you ought to have had, you wou'd not dare to have debated it, you wou'd be frighten'd at the distant Approach of it, and fly from it as from Destruction.

Idleness is a great Incentive to Lust, and must on that Account be avoided ; it creeps in at those Emptinesses of Time, when the Soul is unemploy'd, and the Body is at ease. No easy, healthful, and idle Person was ever chaste, if a Temptation fell in his way. Of all Employments, bodily Labour is most useful to answer this good End. When the Body is tir'd with honest Toil, 'twill give no Encouragement to the Tempter to attack ; he will never venture upon you if he is not sure of having the Flesh on his side. The Soul of itself wou'd, in most Cases, be too hard for him, and in this particularly ; there is nothing in Impurity which does not shock it when 'tis not bias'd by the Lust of the Body ; keep that low, and the Mind will raise itself above Temptation. Church Discipline enjoins Corporal Mortifications, and hard Usages of the Body, to its Members. Fastings, solemn and real, may be Helps to Chastity ; but the Mind must be first well convinc'd of the Danger of this Sin, or all these outward Penances will avail little, those especially that are purely nominal. There is no greater Farce play'd than such *Fasters* act toward Heaven, who will not indeed eat Flesh, but will mortify themselves with the most exquisite Delicacies in Fish, improv'd for the Palate by the most heartening Sauces : These, in so disciplining themselves, mock him who will not be mock'd ; and, instead of mortifying, pamper the Flesh, and add new Fuel to the Flame of Lust. A spare Diet, a thin coarse Table, seldom Refreshment, frequent and real Fastings, are of some Profit against the Spirit of Fornication. By cutting off the Enemies Provisions we doubtless weaken his Strength ; yet all this will not avail, unless we conceive a Detestation of the Evil of it, as an Offence to God, and arm our Minds against it by his Grace. Poverty  
fine

fins against Chastity as well as Riches, and Colleges are  
 equally polluted with Courts. One would think that the  
 Anxiety of such as are in Want shou'd not give room for  
 those hot Desires, which are the natural, and often the  
 intended Effects of Luxury; yet in Prisons, where the  
 confin'd Wretches feed hard and lie hard, Lust fre-  
 quently awakens them in their miserable Nights, and  
 the Devil flatters them that the Enjoyment of one vile  
 Pleasure, which is in their Power, will compensate for  
 the Loss of all others that are not so. The extraordi-  
 nary Mortifications injoin'd by the Church of *Rome*,  
 and recommended by some Protestants who lay too  
 much Stress on outward Discipline, are not, methinks,  
 worthy the Dignity of Christianity. Shall I boast of  
 my Purity when I am reduc'd to Impotence? or con-  
 sider in that Chastity which is the Effect of Pain? when  
 Ease and Strength are recover'd, and the Body will not  
 bear to be always in Pain and Impotency, if the Mind  
 has no better Defences, how soon will Temptation  
 break in upon it, and fill up that dangerous Interval  
 with Sin. *To bring the Body under*, was *St. Paul's* Re-  
 medy, and it is a good one, but it may deceive us; it  
 is a Traitor that will deceive itself when we most trust to  
 it; the Soul must be always upon the Watch, and then  
 outward Discipline may and will be effectual. What a  
 noble Chastity was that *Nicomedian* Prince blest with,  
 who, as *St. Jerom* tells us, being tempted upon Flowers,  
 and a perfum'd Bed, with a soft Violence, and so far  
 ty'd down to the Temptation, that he could not disen-  
 gage himself, being solicted with all the wanton Cir-  
 cumstances of *Asian* Lewdness, by an impure Courtesan,  
 lest the Easiness of his Posture should betray him, he  
 spit out his Tongue into her Face, to represent that no  
 Virtue costs so much as Chastity.

Fly then from all Occasions of Impurity; From loose  
 Company, Balls, Revellings, indecent Mixtures in Dan-  
 cings, idle Talk, private Society with strange Women,  
 gazing upon a beauteous Face, from fingering Women,  
 amorous

amorous Gestures, loose Attire, Feasts and Perfumes, from Wine and Strong Drinks made to persecute Chastity : Some of these are the very Prologues to Lust. Remember 'tis easier to die for Chastity than to live with it, and the Executioner cou'd not extort a Consent from some Persons from whom a Lover wou'd have intreated it. The Glory of Chastity will easily overcome the Rudeness of Fear and Violence, but Easiness and Softness, Persuasion and Tenderneſs, like the Sun, make a Virgin lay by her Veil and Robe ; which Persecution, like the *Northern* Wind, wou'd make her hold fast and wrap close about her.

When a Woman thinks she is belov'd, she is very far gone in the way of Loving ; and apt to believe there cannot be so much harm as is represented to her, in what is so generous and grateful. Poor Delusion ! Shou'd Generosity and Gratitude make her damn her own Soul, because her Lover would damn his ? But the Devil puts on all Shapes, and appears sometimes like an Angel of Light ; he puts fair Glosses on the foulest Actions, confounds Vice and Virtue, and covers a pleasing Temptation with the most specious Pretences.

He who will secure his Chastity, must first cure his Pride and his Rage. Lust is often the Punishment of a proud Man, to tame the Vanity of his Pride, by the Shame and Affronts of Unchastity ; and the same intemperate Heat which makes Anger kindles Lust.

A sure way to escape Temptation is to fly one's self. Avoid being alone when you are afraid of it ; seek Relief in Company, whose Modesty may suppress, or their Society divert, all unclean Thoughts ; and not that whose wanton Mirth may awaken Lust when it was asleep, as is commonly the Effect of the joyous and galant Conversation of this Age. There is a Reverence due to Numbers which checks the Lewdness of the Tongue, and take care not to associate with such as are insensible of that Reverence, and had rather be merry than discreet and chaste ; though what they call  
Mirth

Mirth is generally so beastly when it turns on Chastity, that wise Men wou'd have an equal Contempt and Abhorrence for the Ribaldry and Folly.

Pray often, and fervently, to God, who is the Essence of Purity, that he would be pleas'd to reprove and cast out the unclean Spirit: For besides the Blessings of Prayer, by way of Reward, it has a natural Virtue to restrain this Vice. Prayer against it is an Unwillingness to act it, and so long as we heartily pray against it, our Desires are secur'd, and the Tempter has no Power. This was St. Paul's other Remedy, *For this Cause I besought the Lord thrice*; and there is equal Reason and Advantage in the Use of it. The main thing which is to be secur'd in this Affair, is a Man's Mind, he who goes about to cure Lust by bodily Exercise alone, or Mortifications, shall find them sometimes instrumental to it, always insufficient, and of little Profit: But he who has a chaste Mind, shall find his Body apt enough to take Laws: Let it do its worst it cannot make a Sin, and in its greatest Violence, can only produce a little natural Uneasiness, not so much Trouble as a severe Fast, or a hard Lodging. If a Man be hungry he must eat, if he be thirsty he must drink at some convenient time, or else he dies; but if the Body be rebellious, provided the Mind be chaste, let it do its worst, if you resolve perfectly not to satisfy it, you can receive no great Evil by it.

These Considerations may give room for others, arising from every one's own Experience. The Subject itself is so nice, that it must be touch'd with Delicacy. 'Twill be easily comprehended, what are the Evils we wou'd exhort to be avoided, what the Helps we may find in order to it. 'Tis a sad thing, that a Sin which carries along with it eternal Damnation, shou'd pass off as a Trifle; that it shou'd be a sort of a Jest to speak ill of it; and that without being Advocates for Whoremongers and Adulterers, one can hardly escape the Scandal of being precise. The Souls of Men are not to  
be

be complimented into Security ; and let the greatest and fairest of Mortals know, the time will come, when to have been Fair and Great will avail them nothing, and to have been Pure and Holy will crown them with immortal Glory.

The Remedies we have mention'd, are of universal Efficacy against Lewdness in all Cases extraordinary and violent ; but in ordinary and common, the Remedy which God has provided, honourable Marriage, has a natural Efficacy, besides a Virtue, by divine Blessing, to cure the Inconveniencies which otherwise might afflict Persons temperate and sober.

'Tis true, Marriage is, like other good things, seldom spoken of but in sport ; it is generally taken to prevent the Inconveniencies of Fortune, rather than those of Virtue : The Punishment as generally follows the Crime ; and those that marry for Money only, have rarely any thing else with it that tends to Happiness. No wonder People, so given up to Avarice, shou'd fall into other Sins ; that the Neglect of those Wives whom they took out of Covetousness, and not out of Love, shou'd end in Adultery on both sides, and such vicious Marriages be the Ruin of their Peace here, and their Happiness hereafter.



## M O D E S T Y.

**W**ILL not the Ladies take themselves to be affronted, if we shou'd so much as question that they want Lessons on this Virtue ? Will not Men despise us for thinking it becomes them ? Is not the *bashful* Man in the *Cavalier* Phrase a *Coward* ? Is it not a Term of Reproach ? 'Tis very hard, that in a Country professing Christianity and Reformation, most of these Virtues are so out of Fashion, that it

is a most uncourtly Business to endeavour to recommend them. Those that do it are forc'd to affect *Ludicrous Turns*, and to perform by Satire, and not by Instruction. People who are not afraid of being damn'd, are afraid of being laugh'd at, and such as reprove with Gravity and Concern, may answer the Dictates of their own Consciences, but will have very little Effect on their Neighbours.

Let us however, do our Duty ; let us study to find out the Paths of Truth and Salvation, and put those that err in the right way in which they should walk. No Virtue will give more Grace to all their Actions than this of Modesty, whether we consider it as oppos'd to Boldness and Indecency, or to Lightness and Wantonness.

*Zeno* has not ill defin'd it to be the *Science of decent Motion*, it being that which guides and regulates the whole Behaviour, checks and controlls all rude Exorbitancy, and is the great Civilizer of Conversation : 'Tis indeed a Virtue of general Influence ; it does not only balast the Mind with sober and humble Thoughts of ones self, it also steers every part of the outward Frame : It appears in the Face in calm and meek Looks ; the Impression of it is so strong there, that it has thence acquir'd the Name of *Shamefacedness*. Certainly nothing gives so great a lustre to Beauty in Women ; 'tis of itself so beautiful, that it has been a Charm to Hearts insensible of all others, and conquer'd when a fair Face has without it set out all its Glories in vain. An innocent Modesty, a native Simplicity of Look, eclipse all the glaring Splendors of Art and Dress. Let Nature and Art contribute to render a Woman lovely, if Boldness be to be read in her Face, it blots out all the Lines of Beauty, and like a Cloud over the Sun, intercepts the View of all that was otherwise amiable, rendring its Blackness the more observable, by being placed near somewhat that was apt to attract the Eyes.

Modesty

Modesty confines not its self to the Face, it is there only in Shadow and Effigy ; it is in Life and Motion, in the Words, whence she banishes all Indecency and Rudeness, all Insolence and Disdain, with whatever else may render a Person troublesome or ridiculous to Company. It does not only refine the Language, it often modulates the Voice and Accent, it admits no unhandson Earnestness or Lewdness of Discourse ; the latter of which was thought so indecent in *Carneades*, tho' in his publick Lecture, that the *Gymnasiarch* reprov'd him for it ; and sure, if it were not allowable to a Philosopher in his School, it will less become a Woman in ordinary Conversation. A Woman's Tongue shou'd be like the imaginary Musick of the Spheres, sweet and charming, but not to be heard at a distance. As Modesty prescribes the Manner, so it does also the Measure of Speaking ; it restrains all Excess of Talking, a Fault incident to none but the Bold. To monopolize the Discourse of the Company, is a certain Sign of the good Opinion a Person has of himself, and as certain a way to lose that of the Company ; every one desires to be heard in his turn, every one expects Applause from what he says, as well as he who wou'd ingross all : He who wou'd please in Conversation, must endeavour to please others, and that cannot be done without hearing them with good liking, with which they will then hear you. The divine Poet *Herbert* says on this Occasion,

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*A civil Guest,  
Will no more talk all, than eat all at a Feast.*

To be always talking in Company is assuming an insufferable Superiority over it ; it looks as if you took them for your Pupils, and thought they wanted your Instruction. The wise *Socrates* said, *It is Arrogance to speak all, and to be willing to hear nothing.* This is a Vice in both Sexes ; the forward Coxcomb is sure to be the Jest or Contempt of those he is eternally talking to,

to, and the as forward Coquette renders herself as ridiculous as she thinks she is engaging: 'Tis an Insolence unbecoming a Man, and more especially a Woman.

This was so much the Sentiment of the ancient *Romans*, that they allow'd not Women to speak publicly, tho' it were in their own necessary Defence; infomuch, that when *Amasia* stood forth to plead her own Cause in the Senate, they look'd on it as so prodigious a thing that they sent to consult the Oracle what it portended to the State: And tho' these first Severities were soon lost in the Successes of that Empire, tho' their *Eastern* Conquests introduc'd Luxury and Corruption of Manners; yet *Valerius Maximus* cou'd find but two more whose either Necessity or Impudence persuaded them to repeat this unhandfom Attempt.

Is not the Indecency of Talkativeness in Women one of the chief Reasons of the Scandal they lie under on that Account? 'Tis said, they talk too much, because they shou'd talk but little; and when they err in it, 'tis the more observable, because it is unhandfom; whether it were from the Ungracefulness of the thing, or from the Propension Women have to it, I shall not determine, but we find the Apostle very earnest in his Caution against it: In his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, he expressly *injoins Women to keep Silence in the Church*, where he affirms it a Shame for them to speak. Our Quakers have broke in upon this Injunction; the Pretence they have for it is no great Compliment to the Sex; they alledge, that St. *Paul* did not forbid Women to teach when inspir'd, but to speak to one another and disturb the Congregation; as if their Tongues were always so unruly, that Devotion itself cou'd not keep them within Bounds. But leaving these Enthusiasts to their Whimsies, tho' St *Paul's* Injunction seems here only restrain'd to Ecclesiastical Assemblies, yet there are other Places where he is more general, as in his Epistle to *Timothy*, *Let Women learn in Silence*, and again, *to be in Silence*. I hope we shall not be accus'd of Ill-breeding,

breeding, for setting Scripture before the Sex, and shewing what they are injoin'd to there. The Apostle grounds his Phrase not only on the Inferiority of the *Women* in regard to the Creation and first Sin, but also on the Presumption that they needed Instruction, towards which, Silence has always been reckon'd an indisputable Qualification, the introductory Precept in all Schools, as that in which all Attention is founded. *If some Women of our Age, says a serious and sensible Author, think they have out-gone that Novice State the Apostle supposes, and want no teaching; I must crave leave to believe they want that very first Principle which shou'd set them to learn the Knowledge of their Ignorance.* A Science which so grows with Study, that Socrates after a long Life spent in pursuit of Wisdom, gave this as the Sum of his Learning, *This only I know, that I know nothing*; a Proficiency that is much wanting to the Talkers of both Sexes, who confute the common Maxim, and give what they have not by making their Ignorance visible to others, tho' it be undiscernable to themselves. To such may not unfitly be apply'd the Sarcaſm of Zeno to a talkative Youth, *Their Ears are fallen into their Tongues.* Men must not assume to themselves a Privilege of perpetually speaking, because it is deny'd to Women. It is not becoming in the one, because it does not become the other. But it being more indecent and more observable in Women, it is therefore prest the more home to them to beware of it.

For those of the Sex who are guilty of this Vice are generally guilty of another, which is Slander; their Tongue runs mostly against somebody or other, whether they have or have not offended them: They never want Matter, either from their own Invention or the Invention of others. Truth will not furnish them with half an Hour's Conversation, the rest of it is made up with what they have heard or invented of their Neighbours. They begin always with a due Abhor-

rence

rence of the Crime they are about to commit. They will by no means wrong the injur'd Person, and then they do it as maliciously and effectually as they can. It is to be hoped it prevails mostly among the Vulgar; but the Great have also their *scandalous Chronicles*, and they manage themselves in a great measure, as if the best way for them to secure their own Reputation, was to blacken others. The Education of the Noble shou'd set them above such base and mean Entertainments. But as Tattling is the Effect of Idleness, it is not unreasonably to be fear'd, that where there is most of the Cause, there will be some of the Effect; and indeed it wou'd puzzle one to conjecture how that round of formal Visits among Persons of Quality shou'd be kept up without this incessant Chat of Calumny. Can their Visits only be a dumb Shew? Does the Conversation roll upon the unfashionable Theme of Piety and Virtue, Wisdom and Discretion? Is good Housewifery one of the dull Topicks they handle there? When the News from the Opera and Play-house is run over, what remains but that of the Park and the Assembly? Thence arise a thousand Subjects of Scandal, which is a most inexhaustible Reserve. It has so many Springs to feed it, it is scarce possible it shou'd fail. It flatters the Envy of some, the Spleen of others, the Revenge of Rivals, either in Love or Splendor, Passions which the Sex are the more subject to, the less they are naturally able to defend themselves against them. But this Vice of Slander is not more frequently introduc'd by any thing than the Vanity of the Wit, which has no where a more free and exorbitant Range, than in censuring or deriding: It finds not only Exercise but Triumph too. Vain Persons seldom considering the Infirmities or Follies of others without some Complacencies and assuming Reflexions on themselves, which how disagreeable it renders this Liberty of Talking to that Modesty we recommend, is obvious enough: and would God it were only opposite to that. It is no less

less so to all the Obligations of Justice and Charity, which are scarcely so frequently violated by any thing, as by this Licence of the Tongue.

Another Vice of this kind which the Sex is generally charged with, is the revealing of Secrets; an Infirmary presum'd so incident to them, that *Aristotle* is said to have made it one of the three things he solemnly repented of, that he had ever trusted a Secret with a Woman. By how much the greater Prejudice they lie under in this respect, the greater ought to be their Caution to vindicate, not only themselves, but their Sex from the Imputation, which is indeed extremely reproachful. This blabbing Humour being a Symptom of a loose impotent Soul, a kind of Incontinence of the Mind, that can retain nothing committed to it; but as if that also had its diabetick Passion, perpetually and almost insensibly evacuating all. However willing Men are to appropriate this to the Sex, yet the Fault is owing only to an ill Constitution of Mind; for there are Instances of heroick Taciturnity in Women, as shining as any the Men can boast; in whom this ill Constitution is often no less visible. Those Women who by Reason and Virtue have acquir'd a Firmness and Solidity of Soul, are as sure Repositories of a Secret as the most masculine Confident: Such therefore should be clear'd of the general Accusation; and their Example shews the rest, that Nature has put them under no fatal Necessity of being thus impotent. A Secret is no such unruly thing but it may be kept in; they may take the wise Man's Word for it; *If thou hast heard a Word let it die with thee, and behold it will not burst thee.*

These Reflexions are in a particular manner address'd to the softer Sex; not but that they are useful to Men too, Modesty being a Virtue in them as well as in Women, as it is oppos'd to Impudence. To have that Command of ones self, as faithfully to keep the Secrets we are intrusted with, shews a strong Mind, and is a  
piece

piece of daring Manliness, which Women may affect without breach of Modesty. It wou'd be well if they wou'd take it in exchange for that virile Boldness which is now too common even among Ladies. Such a degenerate Age do we live in, that every thing seems inverted; the different Manners of Sexes are confounded; Men fall into the Effeminacy and Delicacy of Women, and Women take up the Confidence, the Boldness of Men, under a Notion of good Breeding. A Blush formerly reputed the Colour of Virtue, is reckon'd worse Manners than those things which ought to occasion it. How do they stand the Insults of Lewdness at the Theatre? and to blush at them wou'd be accounted a Weakness which nothing but the Simplicity of a Country Girl cou'd excuse. A Weakness that soon wears off in those who bring it to Town with them: A few Weeks Play-house Discipline polishes them of that Rusticity, and advances them to a modish Assurance, which seldom terminates in itself, but is design'd to carry them on till they arrive at a perfect Metamorphosis. Their Gesture, their Language, nay their Habit too, being affectedly Masculine, they have Men to serve them even in their Bedchambers, and make no scruple of receiving Visits in their Beds, to imitate the Freedom of the *French*, free only in *Vanity* and *Impudence*, and Slaves in every thing else. So that, *If others did not remember them to be Women, themselves cou'd easily forget it.*

Was this Affectation confin'd to indifferent things it were more tolerable; but alas! it extends farther; and there are Women, who think they have not made a sufficient Escape from their Sex, till they have assum'd the Vices of Men too. A sober modest Dialect is too effeminate for them; a blustering, ranting Stile is taken up; and to shew their Proficiency in it, adorn'd with as many Oaths and Imprecations, as if they had had their Breeding in a Camp, and meant to vindicate their Sex from the Imputation of Timorousness, by daring God Almighty.

Almighty. What shall we say of those Great Ones, whom neither the Majesty of Heaven, nor the Presence of their Prince can keep within the Bounds of Religion and Decency? who think their Quality excuses their Boldness, and takes off all that's shocking in Impudence. Fly them, ye Fair ones, as you wou'd Infection; for know, there is no Pestilence so fatal, as that which touches the Mind, and no Death so dreadful, as that which is eternal. An Oath has a harsh Sound in any one's Mouth, but it is horrible out of a Woman's; there is no Noise on this Side Hell which can be more amazingly odious; yet this terrible Discord have some exalted Names introduc'd in the Musick of the *British* Language. Happy for us had we still been strangers to them, and to their bold and wanton *Airs* in all things. 'Tis scandalous among civiliz'd People in the dark Kingdoms of Popery; what then shou'd it be in those that have the glorious Light of the Reformation? Female Swearers want the wretched Pretence Men make use of to excuse them. Custom was so far from drawing them into it, that they must have been forc'd to struggle hard with it, and cou'd not, without taking pains, acquire so hateful and so unnatural an Habit. They have been very kind to the other Sex in this Experiment, by shewing the World there can be something worse.

Few of these She-Bullies stop here. If they Swear, they will very often usurp another beastly Vice of the Mens, Drinking: A Vice detestable in all, but prodigious in Women; who put a double Violence on their Nature, the one in the Intemperance, the other in the Immodesty; and tho' they may take the immediate Copy from Men, yet to the Praise of their Proficiency, they outdo their Exemplar, and draw nearer the Original; nothing human being so much a Beast as a drunken Woman. This is evident, if we look only to the meer Surface of the Crime; but if we dive farther into its Inferences and Adherences, the Beastliness

of it is equally abominable and damnable. She who is first a Prostitute to Wine will soon be to Lust also; she has dismiss'd her Guards, discarded all the Suggestions of Reason as well as Religion, and is at the Mercy of any, of every Assailant: And when we consider how much fuller the World is of *Ammons* than of *Josephs*, it will not be hard to guess the Fate of that Woman's Chastity, which has no other Bottom than that of Mens. Thus unless her Vice secure her Virtue, and the Loathsomeness of one prevents Attempts on the other, 'tis scarce to be imagin'd, that a Woman who loses her Sobriety should keep her Honesty. This Vice, as well as others, has gain'd ground in our Days more than ever. It is to be hop'd that the *Scandal* of the Times abuses the Sex, in the Reports of their immoderate Use of strong Drinks. Let them have a care how they give way to it; 'twill steal upon them, and increase insensibly, and what they at first dare not do out of their Closets, they will in time do openly and without Shame. Let them affect Indigestions for the sake of the Cordials, that little Piece of Modesty will leave them when Custom has taken off the Indecency of drinking them. It seldom stops there; and was the Infamy that attends it in this World its only Punishment, a Woman shou'd, methinks, have an Abhorrence for a Vice which will certainly make her abhorr'd.

Having consider'd Modesty, as it is oppos'd to Boldness and Indecency, let us now consider it as oppos'd to Levity and Wantonness.

In this Sense we shall find it the most indispensable Requisite of a Woman, so essential and natural to the Sex, that, as far as she departs from it, so far does she depart from Womanhood itself; but the total abandoning it, ranks Women among Brutes; nay, it sets them as far below them as acquir'd Vileness is below a native: 'Tis so much an Instinct of Nature, that tho' many suppress it in themselves, yet they may not so  
darken

darken the Notion in others, but that an impudent Woman is look'd on as a kind of Monster, a thing diverted and distorted from its proper Form.

The Repugnancy there is in Nature to Impudence appears in the Struggling and Difficulty in the first Violations of Modesty, which always begins with Regrets and Blushes, and requires a great deal of Self-denial, much of vicious Fortitude to encounter with the Recoilings and Upbraidings of their own Minds.

'Tis a melancholy Reflexion that, in this also, our Age has arriv'd to as compendious Arts of this kind as industrious Vice can suggest, and we have but too many Instances of early Proficients in this Learning; yet I dare appeal even to the forwardest of them, whether at first they cou'd not with more ease have kept their Virtue than lost it? The Horrors and Shame which precede those first Guilts are so great, that they must certainly commit a Rape upon themselves, force their own Reluctances and Aversions before they can become willing Prostitutes to others. This their Seducers seem well to understand, and upon that Score are at the Pains of so many preparatory Courtings, such Expence of Time and Money, as if this was so uncouth a Crime that there was no Hope to introduce it, but by a Confederacy of some more familiar Vices; their Pride or Covetousness, their Love of Mirth and good Cheer, Dancings and Musick; where several Freedoms, innocent in themselves, lead the way to others which are criminal: Wherefore the best way for Women to countertermine those Stratagems of Men, is to be superciliously vigilant even of the first Approaches. He who means to defend a Fort must not abandon the Outworks: and she who will secure her Chastity must never let it come to a close Siege, but repel the most remote Insinuations of a Tempter. When we speak of Modesty, in our present Notion of it, we are not to oppose it only to the grosser Act of Incontinency, but to all those Mis-behaviours which either discover or

create an Inclination to it; of which sort is all Lightness of Carriage, wanton Glances, obscene Discourse, things which shew a Woman so weary of her Honour, that the next Comer may reasonably expect a Surrender, and consequently be invited to the Assault. There is a Lightness of Carriage which may be Criminal, tho' without any intended Incontinency, as it inflames Desire in the Beholder, whether it is gratify'd or not. This Lightness is what Women are far from thinking a Vice; it gives them an *Air*, as they call it, and Affectation, which is always an Offence to Modesty. As for the *Estraiterie* of vicious Women, it is so gross that it deserves not to be corrected with Lectures only; and where some have not abandon'd themselves to the utmost License in Lewdness, yet their Looks, their Gestures, their Wit, if they have any, tend all to Temptation, they will charm at all Ventures, they will be admir'd, be belov'd, and to compass their Ends, exchange that truly lovely Simplicity, which was the Ornament of the Women of old, for a forward bidding Impudence, which is forbidding to all Men of Sense and Delicacy. One wonders how young Women so soon acquire this impudent Carriage, so contrary to their native Modesty: It may first be taken up as Fashion in Dress, meerly in Imitation of others, and embrac'd implicitly upon the Authority of those whose Examples govern the Mode. When a silly Girl, who has still so much of the Child as to admire every thing that glitters, sees these things practis'd by the gay People of the World, 'tis not strange if she takes them as a part of their Accomplishments, and upon peril of that formidable Calamity of being unfashionable, conforms to them; which does not so much extenuate the Guilt of those few seduced Persons, as it aggravates that of the Seducers, and attests the Corruptions of the Age, that those things which the less harden'd sort of Prostitutes were formerly asham'd of, shou'd now pass into the Frequency and Avowedness of a Fashion, and become a  
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part of the Discipline of Youth ; as if Vice now disdain'd to have any Punies in its School, and therefore by a preposterous Anticipation makes its Pupils begin where they were wont to end, initiating them first into that Shamefulness, which was wont to be the Product only of a long Habit. This is not the only State of Danger ; they who keep their Ranks, and tho' they do not provoke Assaults, yet stay to receive them, may be far enough from Safety. She who lends a patient Ear to the Praise of her Wit and Beauty, may do it at first perhaps to gratify Vanity only ; but the Flattery bewitches her in the end, and she insensibly declines to a Kindness for that Person who values her so much : She will begin with thinking his Passion is only an Esteem, and, as such, cherish that out of Vanity, which she afterwards will reward out of Love : She will be apt to put the best Construction on whatever he says and does ; his Rudenesses will be taken for the Violence of his Passion, and easily obtain Pardon : She, by degrees, suffers in him what she would take to be insolent in another, and fancying in herself that one who loves her so much can never have a Thought that's injurious to her, she forgets that all his Compliments are mercenary, all his Passion Lust, that to hear him is immodest, to be pleas'd with him wicked ; and if she does not fly in time, she will catch the Flame that is kindled in him, and they both perish in it for ever.

Have a care how you presume on the Innocence of your first Intentions ; you may as well, upon the Confidence of a sound Constitution, enter a Pest-house, and converse with the Plague, whose Contagion does not more subtly insinuate itself than this sort of Temptation. And as in that Case a Woman wou'd not stay to desire what were the critical Distance at which she might approach with Safety, but wou'd run as far from it as she cou'd ; so in this it no less concerns her to remove herself from the Possibility of Danger, and how unfashionable

shionable soever it be, to put on such a severe Modesty, that her very Looks may guard her, and discourage the most impudent Attack. For 'tis certain a modest Countenance gives a Check to Lust; there is something awful, as if there was something divine in it; and with all the Simplicity of Innocence, it has a commanding Power that restrains the Fury of Desire. Such an Authority there is in Virtue, that where 'tis evident, 'tis apt to control all loose Appetites, and he must not only be lustful but sacrilegious, who attempts to violate such a Sanctuary.

A great Hindrance to the putting on this Business of Behaviour, is the Fear of Women to lose any of the Glory of their Beauty by it; a settled Look does not give so much Grace as a Smile. They learn the Art of Languishments of the Eye, to give Life to unborn Passion, even by dying Glances; and they flatter themselves that the Tenderness they affect to move, may pass off for Innocence, and those Languishments themselves for Modesty. There is an Impudence in the very bashful part of their Behaviour; the Flutter of the Fan, the Aukwardness of the Look, the Disorder of the Gesture at hearing what they shou'd know nothing of, warm the Imagination of those Men that see them; and if these modest Women cou'd not, as they pretend, bear the insolence of Vice, they wou'd rather avoid than defy them. Those who to make sure Work leave no Beauty conceal'd, thinking Custom excuses the exposing all, have been taught already, that miserable are the Trophies of Beauty which are rais'd on the Ruins of Virtue and Honour; and she, who to boast the length of her Hair, shou'd hang herself in it, wou'd but act the same Folly in a lower Instance. It has been observ'd, that the Ends of Vice are very seldom gain'd by the Means it makes use of; and in this of Immodesty, the bold forward Beauty is not so sure of Conquest as the shy and innocent. Mankind esteems those things most which are at a distance; whereas an easy  
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and cheap Compliance begets Contempt. While Women govern themselves by the exact Rule of Prudence, their Lustre is like the Meridian Sun in its Brightness, which, tho' less approachable, is counted more glorious. How often do you hear Men commend that Aspect of Modesty which they wou'd fain circumvent? If Women affect Finery and Comeliness to render themselves agreeable only, let them know, they are never so comely and fine, as when they are clothed in Virgin Modesty; never so amiable as when they are adorn'd with the Beauties of Innocence and Virtue. By being reserv'd, their Triumph will be the more illustrious; Parley and Conquest are the most distant things. She who descends to treat with an Assailant, whatever he may tell her of being her Captive, his Purpose is to make her his. He pretends to be intirely at her Devotion, when all the while he is working her Destruction. The Servitude of a Prostitute is the most slavish in the World; for besides all the Interests of another Life, which she basely resigns, she sacrifices all that is valuable in this; She puts her Reputation wholly in the Power of him who has debauch'd her, and which is worse, her Reformation too. If she shou'd have a mind to return to Virtue, she dares not for fear he shou'd divulge her former strayings from it. Thus, like *Catiline*, she is engag'd to future Evils, to secure the past: She subjects herself not only to his Lust, but to all his Humours and Fancies; and not only to his, but to the Fancies and Humours of all those who had been Instrumental to their Privacies. None of them all must be displeas'd, for fear they shou'd blab; and when 'tis remember'd what sort of Cattle they are, which are Inquirers in such Affairs, there can scarce be any thing more deplorable, than to be within their Lash. 'Tis true indeed, some have found a way to cure this Uneasiness, by being their own Delators, not only confessing, but boasting the Crime. They imagine they can prevent Accusation by Impu-

dence, and by seeming to despise Shame, endeavour to avoid it. What Misery are such Creatures fallen into ! need there be a Hell to punish them ? They are insulted by Wretches as miserable as themselves, and have no Defence against their Insults, but that of Insensibility. Those of them that are least abandon'd, have often recourse to this worst of Mischiefs to rescue them from Infamy, impatient of being always in Awe, they think as *Cæsar* did, *'Tis better to die once than be always in Fear* ; tho' an open Defiance of Reproach may cure the Fear ; yet it proves the Fault ; whereas in the Impeachment of others, there is place for Doubts, and Charity may incline some to disbelieve it. To justify the Fact makes the Evidence uncontrollable, and renders the Offender doubly infamous ; for besides the Infamy which adheres to the Crime, there is a distinct Portion due to the Impudence ; yet, like the Scorpion, it must cure its own Sting, and tho' it increases the Obloquy, yet it deadens the Sense of it.

When their Foreheads are thus steel'd against all Impressions of Shame, they are still liable to any other painful Effects of their Sin. What Fears of being left, what Jealousies of Rivals do often torture them ? and not without Ground ; for they cannot but know, that the same Humour of Variety which engag'd their Galants in their Love, may do the same for another, and another ; and so on ; in which they will often have the Mortification to see themselves neglected and forsaken for such as have neither their Beauty nor their Wit : Fancy being the Tyrant of this Passion, it is as possible to grasp Air, as to confine a wandering Lust. Besides, what anxious Apprehensions have they of the Approach of Age, which they are sure will render them loath'd and despicable, as also of all intermediate Decays of Beauty ? How critically do they examine their Glass ? and every Wrinkle it represents in their Face, becomes a deep Gash in their Heart. But if they have at any time the Leisure, or indeed the Courage to look inward, the  
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View is yet more dreadful, a deform'd Soul, spoil'd of its Innocence, and render'd almost as brutish as the Sin it has consented to. Tho' it be in some Respect like the *Beast that perisheth*, it is not, it cannot be in that which wou'd avail it most: An endless Being it cannot lose, nor can it expect any thing from that Preeminence of its Nature, but an infinity of Misery. This is such an amazing Consideration, as, methinks shou'd allay the hottest Blood, no impure Flames being so fierce as to contest with those of unquenchable Fire: 'Tis therefore a very impious, no unskilful Artifice of those who wou'd corrupt the Manners of Women, to vitiate their Principles, and by extinguishing all Hopes or Fears of another World, persuade them to immerse boldly into all the Abominations of this. They find them easily deluded where they desire to be so: They believe what is most pleasing to Lust: They wou'd have a full Swing of Pleasure upon Earth, and such can never have any hope, any desire of the Joys of Heaven: They bury themselves in Sense, and without severe Repentance, will never rise again but to Eternal Damnation; They wish there may be no future Life, knowing that it must be a terrible one to them, by their manner of spending this: They defy the Almighty daily by their Impurities; can they think of appearing before him, to give an Account of their wicked Lives, without Horror? Wou'd it not be better for them there shou'd be no God before whom to appear, than an Omniscient All-seeing One, who has been a Witness of their most secret Sins, and even the Pollution of their Hearts? The Mountains they will call upon to cover them from the Presence of the God of Purity, are immoveable, and they must stand fully expos'd to his intolerable Wrath. Better for them that they cou'd return to their original Nothing; and because it is so much for their Interest, that there shou'd be no God, the way to seduce them, is, to persuade them there is none. This is now an Art of Courtship; this Age dares not trust only to the former ways of Seducement, the Tempter is

for Body and Soul, by corrupting the one with Unchastity, and the other with Infidelity, by vitiating their Morals, and securing their Impenitence. Many Women are so much more concern'd for their Bodies than their Souls, that they are contented the one should be elevated upon the Depression of the other : While with a vain Transport they can hear this outward Form applauded, as Angelical or Divine ; they can very tamely endure to hear their better part vilify'd and despis'd, defin'd to be only a puff of Air in their Nostrils, which will scatter with their expiring Breath, or in the Atheists Phrase, *Vanish as the soft Air*. Whereas they shou'd consider, that they who preach this Doctrine to them, design it only to infer a pernicious Use. 'Tis a Maxim in Politicks, that those Counsels should be sufficiently scann'd, which carry in the Front the Adversary's Interest. This is certainly never more visible than in the Case we are discoursing of ; he who has once gain'd this Point, never needing to contest for all the rest : For he who can persuade a Woman out of her Soul will soon command her Body : Then what was at first his Interest becomes hers at last ; and her Wishes of the Immortality of the Soul are much stronger than 'tis possible her Belief cou'd be ; which is an abundant Confirmation of what has been affirm'd of the servile wretched Condition of such a Person. I doubt not the Consciences of many cannot only attest, but much improve the Description of the deplorable State they are in. Consult that Bosom Monitor, you who have offended ; without that, all Lectures of Modesty and Innocence will be insignificant.

Those who are yet untainted, and by being so have their Judgments clear and unbiass'd, shou'd soberly consider the Misery of their Condition, not only to applaud but secure their own : And whenever the Pomp, the Splendor, the Dress, the Equipage of a vitiated Woman, seem to proclaim her Happiness, let them look thro' that Fallacy, and answer, *That those only are happy who are so at their End.* Their most shining and rich  
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Garments, are but like the Garlands on a Beast design'd for Sacrifice : Their Diamond Necklaces and Bracelets, are but the Chains, not of their Ornament, but Slavery : The Silver and Gold that glitter in their costly Array, cover, perhaps, like that of *Herod*, a pester'd Body, which is not seldom their Fate, or however a more putrid Soul. They who can thus consider them will avoid one great Snare, for 'tis not always so much the Lust of the Flesh, as that of the Eyes, which betrays a Woman. 'Tis the known Infirmary of the Sex, to love Gaiety and splendid Appearance, which render all Temptations of that sort so prevalent over them, that those who have not a solid Judgment of things will be scarce secure.

Women are more one anothers Rivals in Shew, in Dress, in Furniture, in Equipage, and Expence, than in Galantry. That Lover who offers the Woman he attacks a fine House and a Coach, will much sooner prevail than he who offers her his Heart. Pride has been a greater Baud to Unchastity than Incontinency. Women think the splendid Appearance hides the Sin, and that the Filth of it will not be seen amidst so much Lustre. They imagine, foolishly enough, that nothing can be infamous that is envy'd ; for they that envy them have as great a Share of Infamy as themselves. All virtuous People strip them in their Imaginations of their borrow'd Plumes, and look on them as on the lewd Bird of the Night, with Scorn or Detestation.

If these unhappy Creatures had given themselves time to reflect seriously upon the just Value of the Trifles they were so fond of, they wou'd have found there is no manner of Comparison between all the Poms of Sin, tho' never so rich and so shining, and the true and real Glory of Virtue and Honour. Tho' those Terms seem, in this loose Age to be exploded, yet where the things are visible, they extort a secret Veneration, even from those who think it their Concern publicly to deride them : Whereas on the contrary, a Woman that has lost her Honour and Reputation, is the Contempt even of those that betray'd

tray'd her to it, and brings a perpetual Blot on her Name and Family. For in the Character of a Woman, let Wit and Beauty, and all female Accomplishments stand in the Front, yet if Wantonness bring up the Rear, the *Satire* soon devours the *Panegyrick*; and as in an Echo, the last Words only will reverberate, her Vice will be remember'd when all the rest will be forgotten.

There is one worldly Consideration, which it will not be amiss for Women to think upon in their Conduct; and that is, their being most expos'd to Censure; and they shou'd therefore be most careful not to give occasion for it. Their Actions, their Gestures, their Looks, are narrowly observ'd by both Sexes, the one to corrupt, the other to condemn them. They shou'd be always on their guard against Scandal, their Reputation being of the kind of those nice Flowers, which the least Blast withers and kills. Immodesty in their Behaviour will want no Spies to betray itself; it strikes and shocks at once; and Impudence will expose the fairest Woman to the Disgrace of being both affronted and contemned. 'Tis not only the Christian Religion that enjoins the Practice of this Virtue, natural Morals also teach it. Friendship and Acquaintance with immodest People, was scandalous in the times of Pagan Darkeness. Christianity, whose Doctrines are full of Lessons of Purity and Innocence, should make us refine in all things upon the Virtues of the Heathens; for what with them was indecent only, is with us damnable.

Since the Acquaintance and Friendship of vitiated Women is so shameful, 'tis of the greatest Importance to the Sex, to make a judicious Choice of their Company: A Duty as much incumbent on Men, as has been shewn in the foregoing Pages, but especially on Women, to preserve their Modesty unblemish'd. Vice is contagious, and Immodesty has particularly the worst Quality of the Plague; 'tis malicious, and would infect others. A Woman, who knows herself scandalous, thinks she is reproach'd by the Virtue of another, looks  
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on her, as it is said in the Book of *Wisdom*, as one *made to reprove her Ways*; and in her own Defence strives to level the Inequality: The more another has of her Guilt, the less she fancies she has of it herself; as if the burdening another would ease her own Burden. But Sin is full of spite; and tho' ill Women put on the most engaging Outfides, when they are contriving the Ruin of the Innocent, they are Malice within, and design nothing but to make 'em as wretched as themselves. They will by all Arts of Condescension, endeavour to betray a Woman of Reputation; and if they succeed, if they can but once entangle her in that Cobweb, Friendship, they then, Spider-like, infuse their Venom, never leave their vile Insinuations, 'till they have poison'd and ruin'd her. If, on the other hand, they meet with one of too much Sagacity to be insnar'd; if they cannot taint her Innocence, they will endeavour to blast her Reputation, represent her to the World, to be what they wou'd have made her, *such a one as themselves*. On which account there is no conversing with them, but with a manifest Peril of Honour and Virtue. It is true, 'tis not always in one's Power to shun the meeting of such Persons; they are too numerous and too intruding to be totally avoided, unless, as the Apostle says, *one should go out of the World*; but all voluntary Converse supposes a Choice, which every body that will may refrain, may keep on the utmost Frontiers of Civility, without suffering any Approach towards Intimacy and Familiarity.

Were this Distance only observ'd it might be of excellent use; a kind of Lay Excommunication, which might seasonably supply the want of the Ecclesiastick, either quite neglected, or generally made use of against Offences that are purely civil. And tho' People are not injoin'd to avoid their Company in all Cases, yet the doing it, as often as it can be done conveniently, is equally a Duty and an Advantage. This would not only secure the Innocent, but would have a good Effect on the Guilty, who would be asham'd to be thus singled out  
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and discriminated ; whereas while they are suffer'd to mix with the best Societies, like hunted Deer in a Herd, they flatter themselves they are undiscernible. Indeed the Advantages of this course is yet more extensive, and would reach the whole Sex, which now seems to lie under a general Scandal for the Fault of particular Persons. A considerable number of smutty Ears cast a Blackness on the whole Field, which yet, were they apart, would perhaps not fill a small Corner of it : And in this uncharitable Age things are apt to be denominated, not from the greater but worse Part ; whereas were the Good sever'd from the Bad by some Note of Distinction, there might then a more certain Estimate be made ; and whatever the Malice of Man may pretend, 'tis not to be doubted, but the scandalous part of the Sex would then make but a small Shew, which now makes so great a Noise. The Vanity of some Men, the Ill-nature of others, the Envy of some Women, the Malice of others, have done their worst, in endeavouring to lessen the Credit of that Sex, which having fewer Opportunities, fewer Temptations to Sin, has always been most eminent for Religion and Virtue. The best way for Women of Honour to vindicate it is, to make their own Virtue as illustrious as they can ; and by the bright Shining of that, draw off Mens Eyes from the worse Prospect. To this, not only Innocence but Prudence is requisite, *to abstain*, as from all Evil, *so from the Appearance of it too.*

Many Women have acquir'd as ill Characters by their Indiscretion only, as others by their Incontinence. 'Tis as bad with respect to the World to appear wicked as to be really so. She who values not the Virtue of Modesty in her Words and Dress, will not be thought to set much Price upon it in her Actions ; and tho' she may fancy her Consciousness of her own Abstinence is sufficient, she is as much an Offence to the Virtuous as the actual Offender, and as much to be avoided.

Chaste and wise Women will not give the least Umbrage for Censure : *They cut off all Occasion from them that*

*that desire Occasion*; they deny themselves the most innocent Liberties, if they are attended with the least Suspicion of Offence; and no Caution is perhaps severe enough to secure us against the Malicious and the Jealous, tho' 'tis possible some black Mouth may asperse them, yet they have still *Plato's* Reserve, who being told of some that defam'd him, *'Tis no matter*, said he, *I will live so that none shall believe them*. If their Lives be such that they may acquit themselves to the Sober and Unprejudic'd, they have all the Security that can be aspir'd to in this World; the more evincing Attestation they must attend from the unerring Tribunal in the other, where there lies a certain Appeal for all injur'd Persons who can calmly wait for it.

Modesty may be farther consider'd as 'tis a Branch of Sobriety, and is to Chastity, Temperance, and Humility, as the Fringes are to a Garment; nor is it to be regarded as any thing less than divine Grace moderating an over-active and curious Mind, and guiding the Passions; 'tis directly opposite to whatever is bold and indecent, and in an especial manner to Curiosity.

How then do they err against this Virtue, who search into the Secrets of the Almighty, whose Curiosity intrudes into the Counsels of Heaven, who censure the ways of Providence, and not satisfy'd with the Laws of God proclaim'd to all the World, require new Laws for themselves, and for want of a new Table are their own Legislators.

'Tis a hard and disagreeable Task to study and know one's self: Who has Modesty enough to acquaint himself with his Infirmities? Who is humble enough to be content with his Station, and not aspire to be let into the *Arcana* of Government? Indeed those who wou'd exclude all Men from concerning themselves with the Mysteries of State, unless they are call'd to it, give one reason to fear they are like those Juglers, who will not let those that come to see them approach too near, lest they should discover their Tricks, and the Mystery end all in Knavery. But to be always prying into Secrets of Kings and Princes

is a Folly and a Fault, in such as are not made use of in the Conduct of them: Indeed all Men are, in some Measure, allow'd to be solicitous about it; Government is for the good of the People, and as their Happiness or Misery depend upon the good or ill Ministry of it, a modest Concern for it is very allowable; but to extend one's Curiosity to things we are not capable of knowing or influencing, and that with a Presumption and Uneasiness unbecoming our Duty and Station, is an Error that we should endeavour to correct, and do the same when it is employ'd in lower Affairs if they do not belong to us. A Busy-body must be impudent; he that meddles unask'd with other Mens Matters, unless with charitable Intentions, will hardly ever trouble himself, when there is need of his Charity. Such officious Neighbours are their greatest Nuisance; the Itch of knowing keeps them always uneasy, and therefore they will never let any body else be at ease. Another kind of Immodesty, very troublesome and unneighbourly, is that of hearkening at People's Doors and Windows; 'tis invading your Neighbour's Privacy; it lays that open which he wou'd have had inclos'd, and is as dangerous as it is indecent.

If we aim to be good for another World as well as this, we must not content ourselves with considering what wou'd make us agreeable to Men only, but what wou'd make us pleasing in the Sight of God; and our Considerations shou'd have an Eye to that in whatever we do. Wherefore let not the Reader think us tedious or impertinent, when we spiritualize worldly things, and do our Endeavours to make them useful towards those that are heavenly.

Every Man has Sins enough in his own Life: Every Man has his Share of Trouble, and Evils enough in his own Fortune; and as to the Performance of his Duty he will find, upon examining himself, enow of Omissions and Errors to entertain his Enquiry; for which Reasons, Curiosity after the Affairs of others cannot be without Envy and an Evil Mind. What is it to me if my Neighbour's

bour's Grandfather was a Jew, or his Grandmother illegitimate? If this Man owe Money, has a great many Creditors, and that a great many Parasites? But commonly Busy-bodies, are not inquisitive into Mens Virtues and Excellencies, into the Beauty and Order of a well-govern'd Family; if there be any thing shameful in Manners, or private in Nature, any thing that blushes to see the Light, their Care and Business is to discover it. Was our Curiosity to be satisfy'd with great things, the Course of the Earth, the Moon, and the other Planets, the numberless Worlds in the great Expanse, the Ebbing and Flowing of the Sea, the wonderful Formation of Man, and of Animals from an Elephant to a Fly, the Creatures invisible to sight till they are swell'd up by the Glass, those crawling on the Superficies of Fruit; all less to the Eye than a Point; as this Globe of ours is less to thousands, which with all our Advantages of Telescopes leave not to us the Magnitude of a Speck.

Nothing in Nature discovers more Wonders to the Curious than Anatomical Enquiries. Man is *wonderfully made*, says the Royal Prophet, and those that have search'd deeply into his Make know that he is wonderfully supported. Life hangs by a thousand slender Threads, a thousand Channels must the Blood flow through, and the least stop in either stagnates the whole, and puts an End to its Being. Nor are such Enquiries confin'd to any one Order of Men, to any one Family or Profession, to the one Sex or the other, but are useful and entertaining to all those whose curious Minds are always in Action, and for want of nobler Objects descend to Scandal and Impertinence, and impudently thrust themselves into their Neighbours Counsels. The Contemplation of the great Works of God will necessarily induce us to have a most sublime Idea of his Being, and a mean one not only of our Fellow-Creatures, but of ourselves, and make us delight in searching after the Fountain of Truth. How impudent is it in us created Beings, to put ourselves in the Places of the Creator, and, as if we  
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had form'd ourselves, rob him of the Glory of his Creation. Those who dare presume to deny the Being of a God hardly indeed deserve that it should be demonstrated to them, or at least that they should be argued with, with more Seriousness than one argues with People, who we take to be stupid, and incapable of Conviction by Reason. They are for the generality so ignorant, that it makes them unqualify'd for the Understanding of the clearest Principles, and of the truest and most natural Inferences. They insolently demand to have every thing try'd by the Standard of their Senses, and with their Span wou'd measure the immeasurable Extent of the Universe. For such is the vast Disproportion between finite Understanding, and the infinite Power and Wisdom of the Almighty Creator.

Let us consider only with ourselves. Some Years ago we were not, neither was it in our Power ever to be, any more than now that we are it is in our Power to cease from being. Our Existence therefore, has had its Beginning, and is now continu'd by the Influence of something which is without us, which will subsist after us, which is better and more powerful than we. Now if that something is not God, let us but know what it is.

But if such Searches as these be too sublime, if a Man must be led by Sense, and work always upon Matter, if his Inquisitiveness goes no farther than his Eyes can, or at least takes no Delight in diving into those Effects, the Causes of which are not seen, let him first study the Heavens, and the Orbs rolling about the Universe: I cannot better tempt your Curiosity to turn to sublime and profitable things, the Contemplation of which may enlarge the Soul, than by borrowing the Ideas of a famous *French* Author, on this Subject, with some convenient Variations. Observe this Spot of Ground on which you tread, for Neatness and Ornament it exceeds the other Lands about it. Here a Walk of curious Greens, intermix'd with Arches of Hollies of various kinds, and there a tall shady Grove travers'd with Allies, whose Borders are fring'd

fring'd with Flowers; here behold a River cutting its crooked Course through most pleasant Fields, and gliding gently under a long *Parterre*, as green as the opening Spring, and as even as the new-mow'd Meadow. On the Margin see Rows of Trees hanging their spreading Branches over the murmuring Waters; behold, on the other hand, long Visto's extending to a spacious Forest, where, after it has travell'd thro' the greatest Order, the Eye is lost in Woods and Wilds. Look round and see a noble Seat, the Elegance and Situation of which please alike both the Fancy and Judgment; and from thence carry your Eye over a charming Variety of Hills and Dales, Woods and Edifices, till it is bounded by the Horizon. Will you say, this lovely Spot, this Garden, and this Mansion, are the Effects of Chance? Will you suppose that all these things meet together accidentally? No certainly, you will rather commend the Order, the Disposition of them, the Judgment and Fancy of the ingenious Contriver. My Thoughts wou'd be the same with yours, and I shou'd immediately suppose it to be the Dwelling of some Person of Fortune and Magnificence, who had spar'd for neither Cost nor Art to make it worthy the generous Owner. Yet what is this piece of Ground so order'd, and on the beautifying of which all the Art of the most skilful Workmen has been employ'd; if the whole Earth is but an Atom hanging in the Air? Hear then how my Author improves this Imagination.

You are plac'd on some part of this Atom; you must needs be very little, since you hold there so little room; yet you have Eyes imperceptible, like two Points. Open them, however, towards Heaven. What is sometimes the Object of your Observations there? Is it the Moon when at the Full? 'Tis radiant then, and very beautiful; tho' all its Light be but the Reflexion of the Sun's, it appears as large as the Sun itself, larger than the other Planets, than any of the Stars. But be not deceived by outward Appearance, nothing in Heaven is so little as the Moon: The Extent of its Superficies exceeds not the thirteenth

teenth Part, its Solidity not the eight and fortieth, and its Diameter, which is two thousand two hundred and fifty Miles, not a quarter Part of that of the Earth. And the truth is, that what makes it so great in Appearance is its Proximity only; its Distance from us being no nearer than thirty times the Diameter of the Earth, or three hundred thousand Miles. Its Course is nothing in comparison of the prodigious long Race of the Sun, it being certain, it runs not above sixteen hundred and twenty thousand Miles a Day, which is not above sixty seven thousand five hundred Miles an Hour, or one thousand one hundred and twenty five Miles in a Minute. And yet to complete this Course, it must run five thousand and six hundred times faster than a Race-Horse that goes twelve Miles an Hour: It must be eighty times swifter than the sound of a Cannon, or of Thunder, which flies eight hundred and one and thirty Miles an Hour. My Author builds here on the old *Ptolemean* System of the Motion of the Sun, which I do not think fit to dispute with him here: For whether the Earth or the Sun moves, the prodigious Swiftness of the Motion will be alike astonishing. He proceeds: But if you will oppose the Moon to the Sun, with respect to its Greatness, its Distance, or its Course, you will find there is no Comparison to be made between them: Remember only, that the Diameter of the Earth is nine thousand Miles, that of the Sun is a hundred times as large, which is nine hundred thousand Miles. Now if this be the Breadth of it every way, judge you what its Superficies, what its Solidity must be. Do you apprehend the Vastness of its Extent, and that a Million of such Globes as the Earth being laid together, wou'd not exceed the Sun in Bigness? How great, will you cry then, must the Distance of it be, if one may judge of it by its Smallness in appearance? 'Tis true it is prodigious great; it is demonstrated, that the Sun's Distance from the Earth can be no less than ten thousand times the Earth's Diameter, or ninety millions of Miles; and it may be four times, perhaps six times, perhaps ten times

times as much, for ought we know; there is no Method found out for the computing it.

Now for the help of your Apprehension, let us suppose a Mill-stone falling from the Sun upon the Earth; let it come down with all the Swiftneſs imaginable, and even ſwifter than the Fall of the heaviest Bodies, from Places ever ſo high. Let us ſuppoſe alſo, that it preſerves always the ſame Swiftneſs, without acquiring a greater, or loſing from that it has already; that it advances forty Yards every Second, which is half the height of the higheſt Steeple, and conſequently, two thouſand four hundred Yards in a Minute, allow it to be two thouſand fix hundred and forty Yards, which is a Mile and an half; its Fall will be three Miles in two Minutes, ninety Miles in an Hour, and two thouſand one hundred and fixty Miles in a Day. Now it muſt fall ninety Millions of Miles before it comes down to the Earth, which will make it forty one thouſand fix hundred and fixty ſix Days, above one hundred and forty Years in performing this Journey. This is not all that's prodigious in the Heavens, the Diſtance of *Saturn* from the Earth is at leaſt ten times as much as the Sun's, no leſs than nine hundred thouſand millions of Miles; and this Stone wou'd be above eleven hundred and forty Years in its Fall from *Saturn* to the Earth.

By this Elevation of *Saturn*'s, raiſe your Imagination ſo high, if you can, as to conceive the Immenſity of its daily Courſe. The Circle which *Saturn* deſcribes, has above eighteen hundred millions of Miles Diameter, and conſequently above five thouſand four hundred millions of Miles Circumference; ſo that a Race-Horſe, which I will ſuppoſe to run thirty Miles an Hour, muſt be twenty thouſand five hundred and forty eight Years in taking this Round.

Much more is ſtill to be ſaid on the Miracles of this viſible World, or to ſpeak in the Phraſe of the Atheiſts, on the Wonders of Chance, which they allow to be the firſt Cauſe of all things. It is ſtill more wonderful in its Operations than they imagine. Learn what Chance  
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is, or rather be instructed in the Knowledge of the Power of our God.

Do you know that this Distance of the Sun from the Earth, which is ninety millions of Miles, and that of *Saturn*, which is nine hundred millions of Miles, are so inconsiderable, if oppos'd to that of the other Stars, that no Comparison can express the true Measure of the latter? For, indeed, what Proportion is there between any thing that can be measur'd, let its Extent be what it will, and that which it is impossible to measure? If the Height of a Star cannot be known, it is, if I may so speak, immeasurable. All Angles, Sinus's and Paralaxes become useless, if one goes about to compute it; and shou'd one Man observe a fix'd Star from *London*, and another from *Japan*, the two Lines that shou'd reach from their Eyes to that Star, wou'd make no Angle at all, and wou'd be confounded together in one and the same Line, so inconsiderable is the Space of the whole Earth, in comparison of that Distance. If two Astronomers shou'd stand, the one on the Earth, and the other in the Sun, and from thence shou'd observe one Star at the same time, the two visual Rays of these two Astronomers wou'd not in appearance form an Angle. To conceive the same thing another way; suppose a Man placed on one of the Stars, this Sun, this Earth, and the ninety millions of Miles, between them, wou'd seem to him but as one Point, of which there are Demonstrations given; for this Reason, the Distance between any two Stars is not to be measur'd, as near as they may appear to one another; you wou'd think, if you judg'd by your Eye, the *Pleiades* almost touch'd one another: There is a Star seems to be plac'd on one of those which make the Tail of the *great Bear*; your Sight can hardly perceive that Part of the Heavens which divides them; they make together as it were but one double Star: Yet if the most skilful Astronomers cannot with all their Art find out their Distance from each other, how far asunder must two Stars be which appear remote? and how much further yet from one another

another the two Polar Stars? Oh Miracle! Oh Prodigy! It is not in the Power of Numbers to describe it; and what is it that Numbers cannot perform? The Imagination is lost in this tremendous Expanse: Man's Curiosity sinks in Amazement; and the Soul naturally flies to the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, as to the first Cause of these terrifying Wonders.

Behold again, the Earth on which we tread, hangs loose like a Grain of Sand in the Air; a multitude of fiery Globes, whose Bigness and Height exceed the Reach of Conception, are perpetually rolling around it, crossing the wide the immense Spaces of the Heavens, or according to the *Copernican* System, the Earth itself turns round the Sun, which is the Centre of the Universe, with a Swiftneſs which ſurpaſſes Imagination. Methinks I ſee the Motion of all theſe Globes, the regular March of theſe prodigious Bodies; they never diſorder, never hit, never touch one another. Should but the leaſt of them happen to ſtart aſide, and run againſt the Earth, what muſt become of it? On the contrary, all keep their reſpective Stations, remain in the Order preſcribed to them, and follow the Traſts in which they have already roll'd above fix thouſand Years. What a ſtrange and wonderful Effect of Chance? Be confounded, ye Unbelievers, and ſee if infinite Intelligence cou'd have done any thing beyond this.

What is Chance? Is it a Body? Is it a Spirit? Is it a Being, which you diſtinguiſh from all other Beings which has a particular Exiſtence, or which reſides in any place? Or rather, is it not a Mode, a Faſhion of a Being? When a Bowl runs againſt a Stone, we are apt to ſay it is a Chance; but is it any thing more than the accidental butting of theſe Bodies one againſt another? If by this Chance, or this hitting the Bowl, it changes its ſtraight Courſe into an oblique one; if its direct Motion becomes more contracted, if ceaſing from rolling on its Axis it winds and whirls like a Top; ſhall I from thence infer, that Motion in general proceeds in this Bowl from the ſame Chance? Shall I not rather ſuppoſe, that the Bowl  
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owes it to itself, or to the impulse of the Arm that threw it? Or, because the circular Motions of the Wheels of a Clock are limited the one by the other in their Degrees of Swiftneſs, ſhall I be the leſs curious in examining what was the Cauſe of all theſe Motions? Whether it lies in the Wheels themſelves, or is deriv'd from the moving Faculty of the Weight that gives them the Swing? But neither the Wheels, nor the Bowl cou'd produce this Motion in themſelves, and it does not lie in their own Nature, if they can be depriv'd of it, without changing this Nature. And as for the Celeſtial Bodies, if they ſhou'd be depriv'd of their Motion, ſhou'd therefore their Nature be alter'd? Shou'd they ceaſe from being Bodies? One cannot believe that. They move, and ſince they move not of themſelves, nor by their own Nature, one ſhould examine whether there is not ſome Principle without them that cauſes Motion; and this Principle will the happy Enquirer find to be God.

Having rais'd our Souls by the Contemplation of theſe ſtupendous Works of Nature, to their great Original; let us ſee how we can trace him in the moſt minute things, which are as miraculous in their Kind, as the Immenſities of the vaſt Uniſerſe before ſpoke of, and prove as well the Exiſtence and Power of God.

The Ant has Eyes and turns away, if it meets with ſuch Objects as may be hurtful to it. Place it on any thing that is Black for the help of your Obſervation, and if while it is walking, you lay but the leaſt bit of Straw in its way, you will ſee it alter its Courſe immediately. Can you think that the Cryſtalline Humour, the *Retina*, and the Optick Nerve, all which convey Sight to this little Animal, are the Product of Chance? The Animals moving to and fro with incredible Swiftneſs, in Pepper-Water, are each a thouſand times worſe than a Mite, and yet each is a Body that lives, that receives Nouriſhment, that grows, and muſt not only have Muſcles, but ſuch Veſſels as alſo are equivalent to Veins, Nerves, and Arteries, and a Brain to make a Diſtribution of its Animal Spirits.

A bit of any thing which is mouldy, tho' no bigger than a Grain of Sand, appears, thro' a Microscope, like a Heap of many Plants, of which some are plainly seen to bear Flowers and other Fruits; some are Buds only, and others are wither'd. How extremely small must be the Roots and Fibres thro' which these little Plants receive their Nourishment? And if one considers, that these Plants bear their own Seed as well as Oaks or Pines, or that these small Animals are multiply'd by Generation, as well as Elephants and Whales, whither will not such Observations lead one? Who cou'd work all these things which are so fine, so exceeding small, that no one can perceive them; and that they, as well as the Heavens border upon Infinity itself?

Such curious Enquiries into the Wonders of the Creation are apt to cause *Scepticism* in weak Minds, but surely without any Reason; the Heavens, and all that is contain'd in them, are not to be compar'd in Nobleness and Dignity with one of the meanest Men upon Earth. There can be no other Proportion between them than what there is between Matter, which is destitute of Sentiment, and is only an Extent according to three Dimensions, and a spiritual, reasonable, or intelligent Being. The whole Universe, if it be made for Man, is, in a literal Sense, the least thing that God has done for him; the Proof of which may be drawn from Religion. Man therefore is neither presumptuous nor vain, when submitting to the Evidence of Truth, he owns the Advantages he has receiv'd; and might be tax'd with Blindness and Stupidity, did he refuse to yield himself convinc'd thro' the Multitude of Proofs which Religion lays before him, to shew him the greatness of his Prerogative, the certainty of his Refuge, the reasonableness of his Hopes, and to teach him what he is, and what he may be.

Some People, whose Curiosity affects more to puzzle themselves and others, than to convince, object, that the Moon is inhabited; and what is the Consequence, if it is so? If from the Searches you have made into the

Prodigies of the Creation, you are oblig'd to own there is a God, can there be any thing impossible to him? Do you intend, by your Objection, to insinuate, that such great Blessings are not bestow'd on us alone? Let us answer so vain a Curiosity, so frivolous a Question: The Earth is inhabited, we are its Inhabitants; we know that we are so; we have Proofs, Demonstrations, and Convictions for all that we are to believe of God, and ourselves. Let the Nations who inhabit the Celestial Globes, whatever these Nations are, be mindful of their own Concerns; they have their Cares, and we have ours. You have observ'd the Moon, you have found its Spots, its Deeps, its Ruggedness, its Elevation, its Extent, its Course, its Eclipses: Let us grant, that no Astronomer has done more: Contrive now some new and more exact Instruments; observe it again, see whether it is inhabited, what are its Inhabitants, whether they are like Men or whether they are really Men: Let me look after you, and let us both be convinc'd, that there are Men who inhabit the Moon; and then we will consider whether those Men are Christians or no, and whether God has made them share his Favours with us.

As many Millions of Years as can be comprehended within the Limits of Time, are but an Instant compar'd with the Duration of God, who is Eternal. The Spaces of the whole Universe, are but the Point of an Atom, being compar'd with his Immensity. What Proportion can there indeed be between finite, and infinite? What is a Man's Life, or the Extent of a Grain of Sand, which is call'd the Earth? What the small part of that Earth which Man inhabits and enjoys? These Reflexions will of course carry us to the sublime Contemplations of God and Eternity, which will naturally produce the good Works of Religion and Virtue; and commendable and happy is that Curiosity which has so blessed Effects. 'Tis vicious when it searches into the Works of the Creation, with a Spirit of *Scepticism*; and when a Man, priding  
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in his Understanding, presumes to discover the Eternal Secrets of the Creator, whose Power and Glory appear and shine in all things.

The Searches of curious and humble Minds into Nature will more and more confirm him in holy Admiration of the Greatness and Goodness of God. There are no Minds so weak as to be incapable of these Meditations; Life and Sense every where offer Objects to Mankind, which, as often as they see, they must account for them only by Providence. Tell me why this Turf brings forth a Daisy this Year, and a Plantane the next? Why the Apple bears his Seed in his Heart, and Wheat bears it in his Ear? Why a Graft taking Nourishment from a Crabstock shall have Fruit more noble than its Nurse and Parent? Why the best Oil is at the top, the best Wine in the middle, the best Honey at the bottom? But these innocent Inquiries are not what please the over-inquisitive and Busy-bodies; they delight in Tragedies, and Stories of Crimes and Misfortunes; for which Reason a learned Prelate of our Church has said, *Envy and Idleness marry'd together, and begot Curiosity*, which is an Incontinence of the Mind. Adultery itself is often nothing but a curious Inquisition after and envying of another Man's Happiness. Many have refus'd fairer Objects to force the Possession of Women, purely because they were possessed by others. Such Inquisitions are seldom without Danger, never without Baseness; they are neither just, nor honest, nor delightful, and very frequently useless to the curious Inquirer. For Men stand upon their Guard against them, as they secure their Meat against Vermin, laying all their Counsels and Secrets out of the way.

Let us now consider Acts of Modesty, as oppos'd to Boldness, and especially with respect to Religion and Holiness; not to feed Curiosity by explaining the different Kinds of Modesty, but to expose the Wickedness of Boldness, and excite Men to reform the Errors they have committed against this Virtue. To the end we should always bear about us such Impressions of Reverence and Fear of

God as to tremble at his Voice, to express our Apprehensions of his Greatness in all extraordinary Accidents, in popular Judgments, loud Thunders, Tempests, Earthquakes, not only because we are afraid of being smitten ourselves, but to humble ourselves before the Almighty, in the Thoughts of the infinite Distance between his Power and our Weakness. He who is merry in a Storm at Sea, or rallies the roaring of Thunder, regards not when God speaks to the whole Earth, but is possessed with a firm Immodesty. 'Tis not his Knowledge of the natural Causes that is sufficient to excuse his Temerity; for if he knows the Causes, he knows also the terrible Effects, which ought to make him serious and modest.

The Virtue we are treating of teaches us to be reverent and reserv'd in the Presence of our Superiors; to give to all, according to their Quality, their Titles of Honour; we are not to judge of the Merit of those that enjoy those Titles, nor by what means they acquir'd them; such partial Judgments would diminish our Respect for all Honours and Titles; and if we let our Passions guide us, we shou'd never keep within the Bounds of Modesty, but set ourselves on a level, and perhaps above those, to whom we owe Respect and Reverence. Let us not be forward in speaking, let our Answers be pertinent, and especially let us not interrupt others, than which nothing gives greater Offence in Conversation. Present always the fairest side of your Discourse and Temper; speak Truth, and if you have rashly said that which is not true, do not justify it; confess your Fault, ask Pardon, and make Amends. Never boast of Sin, but at least lay a Veil on your Nakedness, that you may have this beginning of Repentance, to believe your Sin to be your Shame. He who blushes not at his Crime, but adds Impudence to his Guilt, has no Instrument left to restore him to the Hopes of Virtue. Be not confident and positive in doubtful Matters, report things modestly and temperately, pretend not to more Knowledge than you have, be content to seem ignorant when you are so, or expect the  
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Fate of Ignorance and Confidence, to be despis'd and avoided. As there is Modesty oppos'd to Boldness, so is there oppos'd to Indecency, which should be observ'd in all Acts of Worship with more than common Care. Use reverend Postures at your Devotions, and great Attention; be careful however that you do not content yourself with outward Ceremony, and not humble your Mind as well as your Body. People, who lay great Stress on bodily Postures and Gestures, do rarely find their Souls affected as they ought to be; the Mind, when it is truly touch'd with Motions of Piety, will naturally shew itself with Lowliness and Humility; conscious that it is in the Presence of a God whom it is always offending, and from whom none of its secret Offences are conceal'd. But those who bow with their Body, while their Soul is exulting with the Pride of its Innocence, or rather revelling with Ideas of worldly Enjoyments; who mind not what they are about, but as Soldiers do at Exercise, and move not but as they are injoin'd by Discipline, or prompted by Custom: To such too much Ceremony will be a Rock on which they will be sure to split, by giving all to the Form, and nothing to the Power of Godliness.

As to our Behaviour towards Man, we shou'd in all publick Meetings, private Addresses, in Discourses, in Journeys, use the Forms of Salutation, Reverence, and Decency, which Custom prescribes, and is usual among sober Persons. Our Enthusiasts, who abuse the Holy Spirit by imputing their *Enthusiasms* to its divine Impulse, err in this as in Dress; and when one may by all their other Actions observe their Hearts are full of Pride, affect a Rudeness which is as ridiculous as it is unmannerly; they will not give Honour, but they will take it; and as much as they are for levelling all that are above them, they expect Distance and Reverence from all that are below. This is Humour, if not Pride, and is indeed consistent with the rest of their Religion, which is all Confusion and Extravagance.

Modest People will, in all Cases of Question concerning Civil Precedence, give it to any one that will take it. How very foolish is it in those that serve at the Altar, to suffer this Affectation of Preference to prevail in themselves, or their Relations? The highest Seat in the Synagogue, the first Place at a Feast, and all such Precedence, is what others wou'd and ought to be willing to yield to them, out of Deference to the Dignity of their Office; but when it is insisted upon with Heat, and the least Failure in a Man's Conduct on this Account resented so as to be remarkable and troublesome, it loses at once all the Reverence that was their due, which ceases to be a Debt when demanded. Humility is the distinguishing Character of God's Servants, and particularly of those that are more immediately employ'd in his Service: Not a Poverty of Spirit, not a slavish Compliance with the Wills of others, but a holy Subjection to that of God, and a Consciousness of our own Insufficiency.

Another Rule of Modesty, as it has respect to Decency, is to observe Seasons. Not to mourn at a Wedding, nor laugh at a Funeral, but *to rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*

All wanton and dissolute Laughter, petulant and uncomely Jests, loud Talking, Jeering, and all such Actions; which are call'd Incivilities in Manners, are Offences also against Christian Modesty. A dutiful and humble Carriage towards Parents is injoin'd by the Laws of God; and a meek complaisant Behaviour towards our Relations and Friends, will increase the Number of the latter, and endear us to them as much as the highest Obligations.

Observe all those things that are of good Report, and are parts of publick Honesty; for publick Fame, and the Sentence of prudent Persons is the Measure of Good and Evil in Things indifferent. It is against Modesty for a Woman to marry a second Husband while she is teeming by the first; or to admit a second Love while her Funeral Tears are not wip'd from her Cheeks. It is against publick Honesty to do some lawful Actions of Privacy in publick

publick Places, and therefore in such Cases Retirement is a Duty of Modesty. Be grave and decent in Clothing and Ornament, in your Walk, and in your Gate; which the Prophet directs when he so severely reproveth a contrary Behaviour: *The Lord saith, because the Daughters of Sion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth Necks, and wanton Eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and make a tinkling with their Feet; Therefore the Lord will smite her with a Scab of the Crown of the Head, and will take away the Bravery of her tinkling Ornaments.*

As those Meats shou'd be avoided, which tempt our Stomachs beyond our Appetite; so also shou'd Persons avoid such Spectacles, Relations, Plays, Clamour, and Mutiny which concern us not, and are besides our natural or moral Interest. Our Senses shou'd not, like wanton Girls, wander into Markets and Theatres without just Employment; but when they are sent abroad by Reason, return quickly with their Errand, and remain modestly at home under their Guide 'till they are sent again.

Let all Persons be curious in observing Modesty towards themselves, in the handsom treating their own Body, and such as are in their Power, whether living or dead. They offend against this Rule who expose their own, or pry into others Nakedness, beyond the Limits of Necessity, or where Leave is not warranted by God's Permission. A Miracle is said to have been wrought about the Body of *Epiphanius*, to reprove the immodest Curiosity of an unconcern'd Person who pry'd too near when charitable People were burying it. In all these Particulars, tho' they seem little, yet our Duty and Concernment is not little; concerning which I use the Words of *Sirach*, *He that despiseth little things shall perish by little.*

The Truth is, nothing is little that carries Sin with it, or the means to prevent it. Abundance of such criminal Trifles there are, whose Punishments are Eternal Death; and let them not any longer be thought Trifles when

the Welfare of our immortal Souls depends upon them. These Considerations on common Life may be reckon'd too ludicrous for the solemn Meditations of Christians; but when we reflect how much Christian Life is influenc'd by common Life, we shall find there are no moral Acts so trivial as not to be worth our informing ourselves of their Guilt or their Innocence, to regulate ourselves accordingly in practising or avoiding them.



## M E E K N E S S.

**T**HO' Meekness is in the main more a feminine Virtue than a masculine, yet we must consider it with respect to both Sexes; the Practice of all Virtues being alike the Duty of both.

Nature, which abhors every thing that's monstrous and disproportionate, teaches us, that Meekness is a Property of Women, whom she has made with a more smooth and soft Composition of Body, and intends doubtless, that the Mind shou'd correspond with it. Tho' Art can represent in the same Face Beauty in one Position, and Deformity in another; yet Nature is more sincere, and never meant a serene clear Forehead shou'd be the Frontispiece to a cloudy tempestuous Heart. 'Tis therefore to be wish'd, the softer Sex wou'd take the Admonition, and, while they consult their Glasses, whether to applaud or improve their outward Form, they wou'd cast one Look inwards, and examine what Symmetry is there held with a fair Outside; whether any Storm of Passion darkens and overcasts their exterior Beauty; and use at least an equal Diligence to rescue that, as they wou'd to clear their Face from any Stain or Blemish.

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We have seen already, *that a meek and quiet Spirit* is the Characteristic of a Christian Woman given by Scripture ; and it must be so to all that will not enter into dispute with God, and contest his Judgment, who has, by the Apostle, declar'd it to be of *great Price in his sight*.

Meekness, tho' it be a single entire Virtue in itself, yet it is diversify'd according to the several Faculties of the Soul, over which it has Influence ; for there is a Meekness of the Understanding, a Meekness of the Will, and a Meekness of the Affections ; all which must concur to make up the *meek and quiet Spirit*.

The Meekness of the Understanding consists in a Pliability to Conviction ; and is directly opposite to that fallen Adherence to their own Opinion, observable in too many, who judge of Tenets, not by Conformity to Truth and Reason, but to their Prepossessions and Prejudices, acquir'd generally by Education and Conversation ; not to mention the accidental Biasses of Passion and Interest : Thence comes Bigotry, and the furious fiery Spirit of Persecution, whose Origin must be from Hell, the Devil being Father of Pride, the eternal Opposite to Meekness. This Prepossession puts People on the Chance of a Lottery ; what they first happen to draw determines them merely on the Privilege of its Precedence : Had *Mahomet* first seiz'd them, his Tenure wou'd have been as indefeasible as Christ's now is. How great the Force of such Prejudices is, we may see by the Opposition it rais'd against Christian Doctrine in gross at its first Promulgation. The blind Zeal of the *Jews* for the Traditions of their Fathers, engaging them in the Murder, even of that very Messias whom those Traditions had taught them to expect ; and afterwards of persecuting his Disciples and Followers. Which blind Zeal did in that Age flame out in the Female Sex particularly : The *Jews* stirr'd up the *devout and honourable Women*, &c. and rais'd Persecution against Paul and Barnabas. They being the weaker as well as the softer Sex, have in all times been the most subject to take violent Prejudices of

Education; and they shou'd therefore see their way well before they run too fierce a Career in it: Otherwise the greatest Heat without Light does but resemble that of the bottomless Pit, where Flames and Darknes do at once cohabit. How many Instances of this blind Prepossession do we meet with in our time, of Notions embrac'd for the sake of Ancestry, and Tenets adher'd to, because they were in vogue in the Times of Great Grandfathers? With what Rage have the Interests of the most vile and worthless Persons been espous'd, purely because they declare their Principles are the same they were bred in?

What Extravagances have not great Ladies been guilty of to vindicate these Prejudices; and where of late does the Spirit of Meekness reign? Not that Men or Women should be too easy and flexible, like Wax ready to take any Impression; this Temper is of equal, if not more ill Consequence than the former. The adhering to one Opinion can expose but to one Error; but a Mind that lies open to the Fluxes of new Tenets, may successively entertain a whole Ocean of Delusions. To be thus yielding is not a Meekness, but a Slavishness of Understanding: 'Tis so great a Meekness of Mind, that the Apostle sinks it somewhat below the Impotence of Women, and resembles it to that of Children; yet it seems the Folly of some Women resembled that of Children in this matter, *ever learning and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*. A Description, which if we compare with our own Times, we must think prophetick. How many Women have we seen led Captive, being affected with the Novelty, or seduced by the pretended Zeal of a new *Teacher*, to whom they have given up their Understandings, and for a while this strong Man has kept Possession? but when a stronger than he has come, it has fared as with him in the Gospel; a louder Zeal, a newer Doctrine, soon divides his Spoils, and that by force of the very same Principle on which he set up, which in a while determines the latter also;

also; and so on, 'till the poor Profelyte has been hurry'd thro' all the Mazes of wild Error. When the Quaker *Naylor* first vented his Blasphemies, his Followers were most of the Female Sex; 'twas the Women that run after him, crying *Hosanna*, and strewing his Way into the City with Flowers. When of latter Days, *Mason* preach'd his Whimfies to the People, the Crowds that gather'd about him were mostly of the same Sex; and how many of them did the raving Inspirations of the modern Prophets deceive? not to mention their political Frenzies; all which should make them equally watchful, against being too tenacious of old Tenets, or too susceptible of new. Some Womens Opinions are like the Palate, distracted by too much Variety: and they at last fix upon what at first they most decry'd. Some have set out in the fiercest Detestation of Popery, and have wander'd so long, like the blinded *Syrians*, that they have at last found themselves in the midst of *Samaria*; being brought by an insensible Circular Motion to that Religion, from which alone they designed to fly; so little do itching Ears know whither they may be carry'd. Women, as they are thought more liable to Seducement than Men, are more particularly aim'd at by Seducers: For as he who is to put off adulterated Wares will choose the most unwary Chapman; so these Sophistacators of Divinity desire the most undiscerning Auditors. That so many of the Sex are so, must not be imputed to any natural Defect, but to the loose Notions they have of Religion; of which they have perhaps some general confus'd Ideas, but have so little penetrated the Depth of it, that they know not why they are Christians, rather than Turks, why of the Church of *England*, rather than that of *Rome*; and while they are thus unfix'd, and have no better Principle than Custom and Compliance, they have nothing to answer to any the grossest Deceit that can be obtruded upon them; which for ought they know, or have consider'd, may be as true as any thing they have formerly profess'd. Now, when any one in this Condition shall  
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be assaulted, not only by the repeated Importunities of false Teachers, but also by the Threatnings of Hell and Damnation, she is like one awak'd by the Outcry of Fire, and in that Amaze will be apt to run wherever the first Discovery of her Danger shall lead her.

The best Antidote against the Poison of new Doctrines is, to examine well the Grounds of the old, and then they would not be carry'd about *by every Wind*, as St. Paul phrases it. The Standard of Truth is the Scripture, the only sure and infallible Guide. If Men and Women would study that with Seriousness and Humility, they wou'd not run the risk of deviating into Error, by the plausible Pretence of Authority on one side, and Purity on the other; they wou'd not be aw'd by Power, nor wheedled by Persuasion; they would weigh every thing in that sacred Balance, and by that Rule govern their Faith and Manners.

Meekness of Will lies in its just Subordination to the Will of God in Divine things; in Natural or Moral, to right Reason; and in human Constitutions to the Command of Superiors; and so long as the Will governs itself by these in their respective Orders, it transgresses not the Meekness requir'd of it. But Experience shews, that the Will is now, in its Depravation, an imperious Faculty, apt to cast off that Subjection to which it was design'd, and act independently from those Motives which should influence it. This, God knows, is too common in all Ages, all Constitutions and Sexes; but the Feminine lies more especially under an ill Name for it; whether it has grown from the low Opinion conceiv'd of their Reason, less able to maintain its Empire, or from the multiply'd habitual Instances themselves have given of unruly Wills, I shall not undertake to determine; but be it the one or the other, 'tis, I am sure, so great a Reproach, as they should be very industrious to clear themselves of. Nothing will prompt them to do this, more than considering rightly the Happiness, as well as Virtue, of a governable Will. How calmly  
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do those glide with it through all, even the roughest Events, who can master that stubborn Faculty? How does a Will resign'd to God enervate and enfeeble any Calamity? Indeed it triumphs over it, and by that Conjunction with him that ordains it, may be said to command even what it suffers; and proportionable, tho' not equal to this, is the Happiness of a Will regulated by Reason in things within its Sphere. 'Tis the Dignity of Human Nature, which distinguishes it from that of the Beasts; the more contemptible themselves in their Kinds, the farther they are removed from it. The Stupidity of an Ass has rendered it proverbial for Folly, when the Tractableness of other Animals has tempted some to allow them to be Rational. Besides, Reason affords something of a Basis for the Will to bottom on. He who governs himself by Reason, that being still the same, will act equally and consonant to himself; but he who does a thing this Moment, only because he will, may the next have as mighty an Argument to do the quite contrary, and so spend his whole time in unravelling his *Spider Webs*, as the Prophet *Isaiab* rightly calls the vain Designs of such brutish Men. An ungovernable Will is the most precipitous thing imaginable, and like the Devil in the Swine, hurries headlong to Destruction, depriving one of that poor Reserve, that faint Comfort of the miserable, Pity, which will not be so much invited by the Misery, as averted by that Wilfulness which caus'd it. So little can such Persons expect the Compassion of others, that 'twill be hard for them to afford themselves their own. The Consciousness that their Calamities are the Effects of their Perverseness, being apt to dispose them to hate that Pity; and it is no small Accumulation of Wretchedness, when a Man suffers, not only directly, but on the rebound too. It re-inflicts his Miseries upon himself, by a grating Reflexion upon his own Madness. So great an Aggravation is it, that even Hell itself is enhanced and compleated by it; all the Torments there being sharpen'd by the woful Remembrance, that they might once have been avoided. A

A Will duly submissive to lawful Superiors, is not only an amiable thing in the Eyes of others, but exceedingly happy to one's self. 'Tis the Parent of Peace and Order, both publick and private. A Blessing so considerable, as is very cheaply bought by a little receding from one's own Will or Humour; Whereas the contrary Temper is the Spring and Original of infinite Confusions; the grand Incendiary, which puts Kingdoms, Churches, and Families in Combustion; a Contradiction, not only to the Word, but to the Works of God; a kind of anti-creative Power, which reduces things to the Chaos from whence God drew them. Many are the Instances our Age has given us of its mischievous Effects, which may serve to enhance the Value of a governable malleable Temper. And as a Will thus resign'd to Reason and just Authority, is a Felicity all rational Creatures should aspire to: So especially the Female Sex, whose Passions being naturally the more impetuous, ought to be the more strictly guarded, and kept under the severe Discipline of Reason; for where 'tis otherwise, where a Woman has no Guide but her Will, and her Will is nothing but her Humour, the Event is sure to be fatal to herself, and often to others also.

Tho' a great Part of these Reflexions are particularly address'd to the Ladies, they are tacitly intended to Men also. There is no Vice which does not affect both Sexes, and no good Counsel that will not be beneficial to both, if 'tis followed. But Women, tho' they are not inferior to Men in Virtue, and perhaps are the more innocent of the two Sexes, having not so many Opportunities to improve themselves as Men by reading, shou'd find in what they read the more Lessons for their Improvement.

The other Restraint of the Will, Obedience to Superiors, is a very happy Imposition, tho' perhaps 'tis not always thought so; for those who resist the Government of Reason, are not very apt to submit to that of Authority. God and Nature do attest the Expediency of this

to Women, by having placed that Sex in a Degree of Inferiority to the other ; there are but three States of Life through which they can regularly pass, Virginity, Marriage, and Widowhood ; two of them are States of Subjection, the first to the Parent, the second to the Husband ; and the third, as it is casual whether they can arrive to it or no, so if they do, we find it by God himself reckon'd as a Condition the most desolate and deplorable. If I shou'd say this happens upon that very Score that they are left to their own Guidance, the sad Wrecks of many wou'd too much justify the Gloss ; but it shews however, that God sets not the same Value upon their being masterless, which some of them do, while he reckons them most miserable when they are most at Liberty. The Subordination of their Sex being God's own Law, there needs no other Argument to prove its Fitness, and to urge their Obedience ; when they oppose it, the Contumacy flies higher than the immediate Superior, and reaches God himself. Many of that timorous Sex wou'd not surely dare so far, were it not for some false Punctilios of Honour, which, like our Duellists, they have impos'd upon themselves. Such Ladies look upon Meekness and Submission as a silly sheepish Quality, below Women of Breeding and Spirit ; on the contrary, an imperious Obstinacy passes for Nobleness, and Greatness of Mind. But alas ! they are wofully mistaken in their Notion of a great Spirit, which consists in scorning to do unworthy and vile things, and boldly encountring the adverse Events of Life, not in spurning at Duty, or seeking to pull themselves from that Sphere, where the divine Wisdom has plac'd them. Stubbornness is the mark of a great Stomach, not of a great Mind ; and a Man may be as well reckon'd brave because he's cruel, as a Woman generous because she's ungovernable.

Whatsoever Value the Sex may put upon themselves, nothing sinks them more in the Esteem of others than Imperiousness ; it renders a Woman a Plague to all that  
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have any Relation to her, a Derision to Strangers, and a Torment to herself: Every the least Contradiction, which a meek Person wou'd pass over insensibly, inflames such an unruly Temper, and transports her to such Extravagances, as often produce very mischievous Effects. Suppose she be humour'd and comply'd with, it serves only to make her more insolent and intolerable; her Humours then grow to such a height, that she knows not herself what she wou'd have, and yet expects that others shou'd: We may apply to such a one, what *Hannibal* said of *Marcellus*, *If he was vanquish'd, he never gave rest to himself; nor, if he was victorious to others.* Certainly the Uneasiness of a perverse Mind is so great, that cou'd such come but to compare it with the calm and happy Serenity of Meekness and Obedience, there wou'd need no other Lecture to commend them to their Esteem or Practice.

The Meekness of Affections consists in reducing the Passions to a Temper and Calmness, not suffering them to make Uproars within to disturb one's self, nor without to the Disturbance of others. Meekness is generally subservient to this Regulation, especially as it is oppos'd to Anger, a two-edg'd Passion; which, while it deals its Blows without, wounds yet more fatally within. The Commotion and Vexation which an angry Man feels, is far more painful than any thing he can ordinarily inflict upon another; herein justifying the Epithet usually given to Anger, that it is a short Madness. For who, that were in his right Wits, wou'd incur a greater Mischief to do a less? 'Tis indeed so great a Distemper of the Mind, that he who is possess'd with it, is unqualify'd for any sober Undertaking, and shou'd be as much suspended from acting, as one in a Frenzy or Lunacy. This was the Judgment and Practice too of *Plato*, who going to chastise a Servant, and finding he grew angry, stopt his Correction; a Friend coming in, and asking what he was doing? He reply'd, *Punishing an angry Man*; as not thinking himself fit to discipline another,

another, till he had subdu'd his own Passion. Another time, his Slave having offended him, *I wou'd beat thee*, says he, *but that I am angry*. Indeed it were endless to recite the black Epithets given by all Moralists to this Vice. It shall suffice to take the Suffrage of the wisest of Men, one that had applied himself to *know Madnefs and Folly*, and he tells us, *Anger rests in the Bosom of Fools*.

What is thus universally unbecoming human Nature, cannot sure be less indecent for the gentler Sex; every thing contracting so much more of Deformity, by how much it recedes from its proper kind. Now Nature has befriended Women with a more cool and temperate Constitution; she has put less of Fire, and consequently of Choler in their Compositions. All their Heats of that kind are adventitious and preternatural, rais'd often by Fancy or Pride, and both look more unhandfomly, and have less of Pretence to cover them: Besides, they have a native Feebleness, unable to assert their Anger with effectual Force, which admonishes them that 'twas never intended they shou'd let loose to that Passion, which Nature seems, by that very Inability, to have interdicted them. When they do it, they render themselves at once despis'd and abhorr'd, nothing being more ridiculously hateful than an impotent Rage. But as the most feeble Insect may sometimes disturb, tho' not much hurt us, so there is one Female Weapon, which, as it is always ready, so it proves often troublesome; you will presently imagine I mean that unruly Member the Tongue, which, tho' in its loudest Clamours it can naturally invade nothing but the Ear, yet even that is a sufficient Molestation, for us to be careful to set a Guard upon it, for fear of its offending. The barking of a Dog, tho' we are sure he cannot bite, is a grating and unpleasant Sound; and, while Women seek to vent their Rage that way, they are but a sort of speaking Brutes, and shou'd consider whether that does not reflect more Contempt upon themselves, than their most virulent Reproaches can fix upon others.

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Some things have had the Luck to become formidable no body knows how, and sure there is no greater Instance of it than in this Case. A clamorous Woman is lookt on, tho' not with Reverence, yet with Dread; and we often find things done to prevent or appease her Storms, which wou'd be deny'd to the calm and rational Desires of a meeker Person. Such Successes have not been a little accessary to fomenting the Humour, yet it will give such Women little Cause of Triumph, when they consider how odious it makes them, how unfit for human Society; *better to dwell in a Corner of a House-top, than with a brawling Woman in a wide House*, says the wisest of Men: And the Son of Sirach, *A loud crying Woman, and a Scold, shall be sought out to drive away the Enemy*. Tho' he taxes the feminine Vices impartially enough, yet there is scarce any of them which he more often and more severely brands, than this of Unquietness. It seems it was a thing generally look'd upon as very insufferable: When *Socrates* design'd to discipline himself to perfect Patience he knew no better way of Exercise, than to get a Shrew to his Wife; an Excellence that may perhaps again recommend a Woman, when there happens an Age of Philosophers; but at present it will be hard for any of our *Xantippes* to find a *Socrates*, and therefore that Quality is as destructive to their Interests in getting Husbands, as it is to the Husband's Quiet when he is got.

This Vice has not that Prevalence over Women of good Breeding, as it has over the Vulgar: But tho' they affect a Silence, or a Complaisance among their Equals, and among Strangers, if we knew the Clamours and Vexations that they are perpetually persecuting their Servants with, these Reflexions wou'd not be thought impertinent on this Account, as well as others. A Scold is a Creature to be look'd for only in Stalls and Markets, and not among Persons of Quality; yet their Women, their Footmen, their Tradesmen, can tell you, that tho' we must not say, Ladies are Shrews, yet some  
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of 'em are every whit as troublesom; and if we may not, out of Decency, call their Distemper by its Name, we must make use of the same Remedies to cure it, as if we did. Such shou'd consider, that as often as they shew themselves angry to their Inferiors, so often do they lose their Superiority: He who is in Temper, having always the Command of him who has lost it. To such, we must recommend the usual Method of Physick, to cure by Revulsion. Let that sharp Humour, which so habitually flows to the Tongue, be taught a little to recoil and work inward: Instead of reviling others, correct yourselves, and upbraid your own Madness, if to gratify an impotent and most painful Passion, you degenerate from what your Nature, your Qualities, your Education design'd you. Anger is corrosive, and if it be kept only to feed upon itself, must be its own Devourer; if it be permitted to fetch no Forage from without, nor to nourish itself with Suspicions and Surmises of others, nor to make any Sallies at the Tongue, it cannot hold long.

*Solomon* teaches them how much they herein consult their Interest and Reputation too; he makes it the distinguishing Character of a *foolish Woman, to be clamorous*; whereas when he gives that of an excellent Woman, he links Wisdom and Gentleness together, *She openeth her Mouth with Wisdom, and in her Tongue is the Law of Kindness*. No Man ever paid dearer for his Experience of the Frailties of the Sex, than this Royal Philosopher; and his Judgment confutes the common Plea of querulous Spirits, who think they appear silly and stupid, if they seem insensible of any the least Provocation; tho' truly if it were so, 'twou'd be full as eligible as to appear mad and raving, which they commonly do in the Transport of their Fury.

Meekness is so amiable, so endearing a Quality, and peculiarly embellishing to Women, that did they consider it with half the Attention they do their most trivial exterior

exterior Ornaments, it would certainly be taken up as the universal Mode in all the several Variations of it.

Having consider'd the Beauty and Happiness of the Virtue of Meekness, let us take into Consideration the Deformity and Misery of the Vice of Anger, its Opposite, and the Remedy against it.

Anger is the profest Enemy of Counsel, 'tis a direct Storm, in which no Man can be heard to speak or call from without: If you give gentle Advice, you are despis'd; if you urge it with Vehemence, you provoke it more. 'Tis our Duty then to lay up a great stock of Reason, that, like a besieg'd Town, we may be provided for its Assaults, and be defensible from within, since we are not likely to be reliev'd from without. Anger is not to be suppress'd but by something that's as inward as itself; of all Passions, it endeavours most to make Reason useless, and is an universal Passion of an infinite Object: For none was ever so amorous as to love a Toad, none so envious as to repine at the Condition of the Wretched, no Man so timorous as to fear a dead Bee; but Anger is troubled at every thing, and every Man, and every Accident; and if it is not suppress'd, will make a Man's Condition restless. When it proceeds from a great Cause it turns to Fury, from a small to Peevishness, and thus is either always terrible or ridiculous; it renders the Body monstrous and contemptible, the Voice horrid, the Eyes fierce, the Face pale or fiery, the Speech clamorous and loud, 'Tis neither manly nor ingenuous, proceeding from Softness of Spirit and Pusillanimity, which is the cause that Women are more subject to it than Men, sick Persons than healthful, the old more than the young, the unprosperous more than the fortunate; a Passion fitter for Flies and Insects, than People who have Minds that are susceptible of noble and generous Sentiments. It is troublesome not only to those that suffer it, but those that see it; there being no greater Incivility than to fly into the Fury and Extravagance of Passion before Company. How often

is this done for a Fault in the Cook, or an Accident in the Butler, for a Pullet ill-dress'd, or a Glass broke, sometimes for the fold of a Gown, not placed as it shou'd have been, and other such Trifles not worth the consideration of reasonable Creatures? Anger makes Marriage a necessary and unavoidable Trouble; it renders Friendships, Familiarities, and Societies intolerable, and turns frequently Mirth into Tragedy, Friendship into Hatred, a wise Man into a Fool; he loses himself when he is possessed by Anger: It perverts the desire of Knowledge to an itch of Wrangling, Justice to Cruelty, Judgment to Oppression, and Power to Insolence: It changes Discipline into Tedioufness and Hatred of liberal Institution; it makes a prosperous Man to be envy'd; and an unfortunate to be pity'd; it is a Confluence of all the irregular Passions; Envy, Sorrow, Fear, Scorn, Pride, Prejudice, Rashness, Self-love and Impatience, are in its Composition; and tho' very troublesome to others, is most so to him that has it. For what a miserable State must that Soul be in, which is possess'd by so many Dæmons?

In order to cast them out, and purge ourselves from such a dreadful Possession, let us diligently observe, whether, in our Desires to suppress Anger, we are angry with ourselves for being so; whether we deal with others like Physicians, who give a bitter Potion, when they intend to eject the Bitterness of Choler; for this will provoke the Person, and increase the Passion. We must quietly set upon the Mortification of it; we must not do it with Anger. Be watchful over yourselves for a Day, that will be no great Trouble to you; add a second Day to your Watchfulness, it will be more easy than the first; and by being thus watchful and observant, you will make your Duty a Habit. Anger is only criminal, when 'tis against Charity to one's self, or one's Neighbour. Anger against Vice is a holy Zeal, and an Effect of Love to God and to our Neighbour, for whose Interest I am passionate, like a Person

son concern'd. If I take care that my Anger makes no Reflexion of Scorn or Cruelty upon the Offender, or of Pride or Violence, or Transport to myself, Anger then becomes Charity. When one commended *Charilaus*, King of *Sparta*, for a gentle, good, and meek Prince, his Colleague said well, *How can he be good, who is not an Enemy even to vicious Persons?*

Besides the Remedies which have been already prescrib'd against this furious Passion, this evil Spirit, with which Mankind is so apt to be possess'd, there are others, which Religion, and the Hopes of everlasting Happiness will inspire. Heaven, an eternal Scene of Content and Joy, is inconsistent with the Rage of a cholerick Man; and his Thoughts can never be erected towards those peaceful Mansions, when his Soul is ruffled and master'd by the Fury of an ungovernable Passion. Address yourself to God, when this Fit is coming upon you, pray for his divine Assistance to overcome it; but it must first be in some degree remov'd, and 'tis then the more likely to be over before your Prayers. An angry Mind is not fit to appear before the God of Mercy. If you must not approach great Men when you are in a Passion, how much more are you to be Calm and Serene, when you present yourself as a Petitioner before the Almighty? The curing of this ill Habit will be the Effect and Blessing of your Prayers.

Seal up your Lips, and let it not out when Anger rises in your Breast; For, like Fire, when it wants vent, it will suppress itself. It is good in a Fever to have a tender and smooth Tongue, but it is better that it be so in Anger; if it be rough and distemper'd in a Fever, 'tis an ill Sign; if so in Anger, 'tis an ill Cause. Angry Words fan the Fire like Wind, and in the Passion of Anger are like Steel and Flint, which strike Fire by mutual Collision. Some Men will talk themselves into Passion, and continue till they have also kindled those they talk to, and they both flame out with Rage and Violence.

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The most excellent natural Cure for Anger is Humility. He who by daily considering his own Infirmities and Failings, makes the Error of his Neighbour or Servant to be his own Case, and remembers that he daily needs God's Pardon, and his Brother's Charity, will not be apt to fall into Passion at the Levities, or Misfortunes, or Indiscretions of another, greater than which, he considers, he is very frequently and more inexcusably guilty of.

Tho' our Saviour suffer'd all the Contradictions of Sinners, and receiv'd all Affronts and Reproaches of malicious, rash, and foolish Persons; yet in all of them he was without Passion, and gentle as the Morning Sun in Autumn: In this also he propounded himself imitable by us: For if Innocence itself suffer'd so great Injuries and Disgraces, it is no great Matter for us quietly to receive all the Calamities of Fortune, Indiscretion of Servants, Mistakes of Friends, Unkindnesses of Kindred, and Rudenesses of Enemies, since we have deserv'd these and worse, even Hell itself.

If we are tempted to Anger in the Actions of Government, and Discipline to our Inferiors, in which Case, Anger is permitted so far, as it is prudently instrumental to Government, and it is only a Sin, when it is excessive and unseasonable, apt to disturb our own Discourse, or to express itself in imprudent Words, or violent Actions: Let us propose to ourselves the Example of God, the Creator and Preserver of all things; who at the same time, and with the same Tranquillity, decreed Heaven and Hell, the Joys of blessed Angels and Souls, and the Torments of Devils and accursed Spirits. When at the last Day all the World shall burn under his Feet, God shall not be at all inflamed, or shake in his essential Seat, the Centre, of Tranquillity and Joy. Tho' the Cause of Anger shou'd at first seem reasonable, defer to execute it till you may better judge; for as *Phocion* told the *Athenians*, who upon the first News of the Death of *Alexander* were ready to revolt, *Stay a while, for if the King*

*King be not dead, your Haste will ruin you; if he be dead, your Stay cannot prejudice you, for he will be dead to Morrow as well as to Day.* So if your Servant or Inferior seem to deserve Punishment, staying till to Morrow will not make him innocent; but it may possibly preserve you so, by preventing your striking a guiltless Person, or being furious for a Trifle.

Remove from yourself all Provocations and Incentives to Anger, especially Games of Chance, and great Wagers, pretty Curiosities, and Carefulness about worldly Business: Manage yourself with Indifference or Contempt of these external things, and do not spend a Passion upon them; it is more than they are worth; they that desire but a few things, can be cross'd but in a few.

Set not your Hearts upon gay and costly Rarities, as Glasses, China-Ware; nor on weak and useless Animals, as Parrots, Canary-Birds, Lap-dogs, and the like; the breaking the one, or the neglecting of the other, are irresistible Causes of furious Anger, in those who take too much Delight in them. Jewels and rich Furniture, if damag'd or lost, will infallibly have a worse Effect on such People: So indeed will any thing that the Soul is set upon, when they meet with Loss or Disappointment in it: Wherefore our Hearts should have more valuable Treasures for their Objects, Treasures that are incorruptible, laid up in Heaven; and in order to the Enjoyment of them, let us endeavour to have a calm and quiet *Conscience, void of Offence towards God and towards Man.*

Do not entertain nor suffer Tale-bearers; they abuse your Ear first, and then your Credulity; they steal your Patience, and it may be for a Lye; if it be true, the matter is not considerable; if it be, yet 'tis pardonable; and you may always escape, by not hearing Slander, by not believing it, by not regarding it, or by forgiving the Person: To this Purpose also, it may serve well if we choose as much as we can to live with peaceable Persons,

Persons, for that prevents the Occasions of Confusion ; and if we live with prudent Persons, they will not easily cause Disturbance to us. These things, 'tis true, are not in many Mens Power, and are therefore prepar'd rather as a Felicity than a Remedy or Duty, and an Act of Prevention rather than of Cure.

Be not inquisitive into other Mens Affairs, nor the Faults of your Servants, nor the Errors of your Friends. If your Friend was mis-represented to you, as may very well happen, consider what an Injustice you do him, in suspending your Friendship, and being angry without a Cause ; use all reasonable Discourses to excuse the Faults of others, considering there are many Circumstances of Time, of Person, of Accident, of Inadvertency, of Infrequency, of Aptness to amend, of Sorrow for doing it ; and it is well that we reap any Good for the Evil that is done or suffer'd.

Be always passive in Contentions, never Active, upon the Defensive, not the Offensive ; and then also give a gentle Answer, retrieving the Furies and Indiscretions of others, by soft Compliance : You will find it sink down quietly, like a Stone in a Bed of Moss : whereas Anger and Violence make the Contention loud and long, injurious to both the Parties. If Anger rise suddenly, restrain it first with Consideration, and let it end in a hearty Prayer for him that did the real or seeming Injury ; the former stops its Growth, and the latter quite kills it, making amends for its monstrous and voluntary Birth.





# CHARITY.

**C**HARITY is a Duty so amiable to God and Man, that we find it often injoin'd in the Gospel, as if it was to be a distinguishing Virtue of Christianity. The *New Commandment* our Saviour gave us, was, *Love ye one another*: Again, *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another*. The Command of God speaks more for this Duty, than all the Arguments of human Reason can do, in Recommendation of the most human of all Virtues. Charity is to be consider'd as it has Relation to the Affections and to the Actions: In the Affections it is a sincere Kindness, which disposes us to wish all Good to others, in all their Capacities, in the same manner that Justice obliges us to wish no Hurt to any Man, in respect either of his Soul, his Body, his Goods, or his Credit; in all of which the first Branch of Charity binds us to wish all good.

We cannot have the least Spark of this Virtue, if we do not wish all Good to the Souls of Men, so precious, that our Saviour thought them worth ransoming with his own Blood. If we do not thus love one another, we are far from obeying the Command of loving as he has lov'd. It were to be hop'd that none who carry'd himself a Soul about him, could be so cruel to that of another Man, as not certainly to wish its Happiness, did not Experience shew us, there are some Persons, whose Malice is so devilish as to teach even the direct contrary, the wishing the damnation of others. Some there are, who, in any Injury or Oppression, make it their only Comfort that

that their Enemies will damn themselves by it. He who is of this Temper is a Disciple of the Devil, and not of Christ, it being directly opposite to the whole Scope of that grand Christian Precept of loving our Neighbours as ourselves. Now, no Man surely, who believes there is such a thing as Damnation, wishes it to himself; be he never so fond of the Ways that lead to it, yet he still wishes his Journey may not end there; and therefore, by that Rule of Charity, he should as much dread it for his Neighbour.

We are to wish all Good, all Health and Welfare to the Bodies of Men; of our own we are generally tender enough, and dread the least Pain or Ill which can befall them. Now Charity, as it is injoin'd us in Scripture, extends this Tenderness to all others, and whatever we apprehend as grievous to ourselves, we must be unwilling shou'd befall another. What kind Wishes we owe to their Bodies, are owing also to their Estates and Credit. As we desire our own Reputation shou'd flourish, so must we, in like manner, desire that our Neighbour's shou'd, or it can never be said that we love our Neighbours as ourselves.

If this Charity of the Affections be sincere, it will keep the Mind in a peaceable and meek Temper towards others; so far from seeking Occasion of Contention, that no Provocation shall draw us to it. Where we have Kindness we shall be unapt to quarrel, it being one of the special Qualities of Charity, that it is not easily provok'd.

It will breed Compassion, when it is sincere, towards all the Miseries of others. Every Misfortune that happens where we wish well, is a kind of Disaster to ourselves. If we wish well to all, we shall necessarily be concern'd in the Calamities of all, have a real Grief and Sorrow to see any in Misery, and that according to the Proportion of their Sufferings; it will also give us Joy in the Prosperity of others, as well as Compassion in

their Adversities, according to the Command, *Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*

It will excite and stir up our Prayers for others. We are of ourselves impotent feeble Creatures, unable to bestow Blessings where we most wish them ; wherefore if we do indeed desire the Good of others, we must seek it on their Behalf, from him whence *every good and perfect Gift cometh.* He cannot be believ'd to wish well in earnest, who will not thus put Life and Efficacy into his Wishes, by forming them into Prayers that will neither be vain nor fruitless. 'Tis St. Paul's Exhortation, that Prayers and Praises *be made for all Men.* These Fruits of Charity are so natural, that 'tis a Deceit for any Man to persuade himself he has it, who cannot produce them to evidence it by.

A farther Excellency of this Grace is, that it guards the Mind from several great and dangerous Vices, as from Envy ; *Charity envieth not,* says the Apostle ; and indeed common Reason may confirm this to us ; for Envy is a Sorrow at the Prosperity of another, and therefore must needs be directly contrary to that Desire of it which is the Effect of Love. How vainly then do those pretend to Charity, who are continually repining at every good that happens to others ?

It suppresses Pride and Haughtiness ; *Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,* says St. Paul ; and where we find this Virtue of Love commanded, there Humility is join'd with it : *Put on therefore,* says the same Apostle, *Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind.* And again, *Be kindly affectioned one towards another with brotherly Love, in Honour preferring one another.* Humility naturally flows from Charity, Love always setting a Price upon the thing belov'd, which is too constantly found in Self-love, making us think highly of ourselves, that we are much more excellent than others. Wherefore since Love plac'd on ourselves produces Pride, let us divert the Course, turn the Love on our *Brethren*, and 'twill as surely beget Humility ; we shall then see and value those

those Gifts and Excellencies of them, which now our Pride or our Hatred makes us overlook and neglect. We shou'd *esteem others better than ourselves*, as the same Apostle exhorts us; whoever therefore is of so haughty a Temper as to vilify and disdain others, may conclude, he has not this Charity rooted in his Heart.

It is a certain Remedy against Censoriousness, *Charity thinketh no Evil*, is not apt to put the worst Constructions on other Mens Actions, but on the contrary, *believeth all things, and hopeth all things*, as St. Paul tells the *Corinthians*; by which he means, it is forward to believe and hope the best of all Men; our own Experience teaches us the same; where we love we see no Faults, witness the great Blindness we have to our own, and therefore shall certainly not be like to create them where they are not, or to aggravate them beyond their true Size and Degree. To what then shall we impute these unmerciful Censures and rash Judgments of others, so frequent among Men, but to the want of this Charity? These rash Judgments, these unmerciful Censures, have been more enormous within these few Years than ever. Under this black Character come those execrable Libels that have of late been publish'd against the Reputation of the wisest and bravest Men of our Times: The Thirst after Scandal has been so furious, that nothing can satiate it. The Writers of these infamous Invectives are such as know not this Virtue of Charity, or Sin against Knowledge, the greatest of all Sins. Whatever Applause they may have from wicked Men for a Season, their Reward will be hereafter with the rest of the evil Doers, in the burning Lake, whose Fires have no end.

Charity renounces all dissembling and feign'd Kindness; where this true and real Love is, the false and counterfeit flies before it. This is the Love we are commanded to have, such as is *without Dissimulation*; indeed, where, this is rooted in the Heart, there can be no possible use of Dissimulation, because this is in Truth, all that the false one wou'd seem to be; and so is as far beyond it; as Na-

ture is beyond Art, nay, as a Divine Virtue is beyond a foul Sin; of which those are guilty that make large Professions of Friendship to Persons, whom, as soon as their Backs are turn'd, they either laugh at or do Mischief to.

Charity casts out all mercenary and self-interested Principles; its Temper is so noble and generous, that it despises all Projectings for Gain or Advantage; *Love seeketh not her own.* What a base Spirit is that then, which places its Love only there where it may fetch in Benefit?

Charity clears the Heart of all Malice and Desire of Revenge; which is so utterly contrary to it, that 'tis impossible they shou'd both dwell in the same Breast. 'Tis the Property of Love *to bear all things*, and how exalted is this Virtue when it raises Man so near to Divinity, as to throw off this natural Propensity of it to Vengeance, and to imitate God himself, who forgives them that forgive others their Trespases? This Virtue exercis'd but towards some sort of Men, might consist with Malice to others, it being possible for a Man that bitterly hates one, to love another; but the Charity of Christians is not to be so limited; it must extend itself to all Men, particularly to Enemies, or else it is not that divine Charity commended to us by Christ. The loving of Friends and Benefactors, is so low a Pitch of it, that the *Publicans* and *Sinners*, the very worst of Men, were able to attain it; and therefore it is not counted rewardable in a Disciple of Christ; he must soar and shake off the Corruption of depraved Nature, which is always for rendering Evil for Evil; whereas Christianity enjoins to render Good for Evil. *I say unto you, love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them, which despitefully use you and persecute you,* was the Command of the Son of God; and whoever does not this, will never be own'd by him for a Disciple. There is not one Precept so often repeated in the New Testament, as this of Charity: *Be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another.* Again, *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: If any Man have a Quarrel against any, even as Christ*

*Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* And again, *Not rendring Evil for Evil, nor Railing for Railing, but contrariwise Blessing.* Is it not prodigiously strange, that Men calling themselves Christians, who have the Gospel before them, and do, or may hear it read daily to them, should give so little Obedience to Precepts so often repeated, nay, not only so, but even publickly avow and profess the contrary, as we daily see they do? What is still more prodigious, is, that Men who are to teach this Law, which the Gospel has so strongly asserted, should give way to Bitterness and Railing, and at one Breath, sink Millions of Souls by their rash Judgments to eternal Perdition. Whence comes this Fury that rages even in too many Pulpits? Is it not the dictate of the Spirit of Malice, which is the Spirit of the Devil? Can any thing be a more direct obeying of him? Those that sin in this kind, take his Livery on their Backs, and proclaim whose Servants they are. What ridiculous Impudence is it then, for Men who have enter'd themselves of Satan's Family, to pretend to be the Servants of Christ? Let such know assuredly, that they shall not be own'd by him; but, at the great Day of Account, be turn'd over to their proper Master, to receive their Wages in Fire and Brimstone. God himself *maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain to the Just and to the Unjust,* a most forcible Consideration to excite us to this Duty of Charity. God is the Fountain of Perfections, and the being like him, is the Sum of all we can wish for; the Desire to imitate our Heavenly Father, is the special Mark of a *Child of his*. Now this Kindness and Goodness to Enemies, is most eminently remarkable in God, and that not only in respect of his temporal Mercies, but chiefly in his spiritual. We are all by our wicked Works Enemies to Him, and the Mischief of that Enmity wou'd have fallen upon ourselves; God had no Motive beside that of his Pity to wish a Reconciliation; yet so far was he from returning our Enmity, when he might have reveng'd himself to our eternal Ruin, that

he designs and contrives how he may bring us to be at Peace with him. And what were the Means he us'd for effecting this? A Degree of Mercy and Kindness, still infinitely greater; he sent his own Son from Heaven to work it, and that not only by Persuasions, but by Sufferings also: He meekly *laid down his Life for us Enemies*; and if *God so lov'd us, we ought also to love one another*. How shameful a thing is it for us to retain Displeasures against our Brethren, when God thus lays by his towards us, and that when we have so highly provok'd him?

What a vast Difference will appear in the Comparison between the Offences of our Brethren against us, and our Sins against God? If we consider the Majesty and Power of the Being against whom we sin, and his infinite Goodness towards us; can Men, of the same Nature with us tho' of the highest eminency in the World, be offended by us as we offend God, blessed for ever? What is the Power of other Men over us, but the Gift of God; And are not we, who are his Creatures, bound to the strictest Obedience to this Original of all Power? All that we enjoy, whether in relation to this Life or a better, was, is, and must be deriv'd from him; and it is therefore impossible for us to offend Men in such a Degree as we daily offend God, our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor; yet he pardons those that sincerely apply to him by Repentance; and shall we not pardon one another? How can those hot Spirits that are dazzled by false and fatal Notions of Honour, reflect upon their Duty towards God and Man on this Article, and run upon the most sanguinary Act of Revenge? For it will not be an Excuse at the great Day of Account, to say, it was the Custom of the Age and Country, the Practice of such a Profession, I shou'd have lost my Commission or my Reputation, if I had not committed the Murder. The Trial before the dreadful Tribunal of God, is not to be evaded by such Excuses; nor will the Blood of our Brother be  
wip'd

wip'd off by the soft Name of *Manſlaughter*: Good God! is the Slaughter of *a Man* ſo ſoft a Name that it renders the Criminal innocent, with reſpect to the Punishment at leaſt? And the Sin is ſo little in the Opinion of ſuch Dealers in Blood, that they look upon Forbearance and Charity as abſurd and unreaſonable; but ſince God himſelf acts it in ſo much an higher Degree, who can, without Blaſphemy, ſay, 'tis unreaſonable? One cannot too often reprove this damnable Cuſtom of murdering one another, out of Punctilio; as if Hell, the Portion of all Murderers, was a Dream, and the Viſions of mad Brains, the Rules that Chriſtians ſhou'd walk by. Leaving theſe execrable Sinners to God and their own Conſciences, let us farther conſider the virtue of Charity, as 'tis pleaſant and deſirable in itſelf.

None can ſo well judge of its Pleaſantneſs as thoſe that have practis'd it: The nature of earthly Pleaſures being ſuch, that 'tis the Enjoyment only which can make a Man truly know them; how unjuſt, how fooliſh is it to pronounce ill of a thing before Trial? Thoſe that have try'd it, have taſted the Sweets of this Divine Grace, and are always longing after Opportunities to taſte them again; thoſe that have not try'd it, may diſcern it to be lovely at a diſtance; if by no other way, by comparing it at leaſt with the uneaſineſs of its contrary. Malice and Revenge are the moſt reſtleſs tormenting Paſſions which can poſſeſs the Mind of Man; they keep Man in perpetual Study and Care how to effect their miſchievous Purpoſes. *They ſleep not unleſs they have done Miſchief, except they cauſe ſome to fall.* It imbitters all the good things they enjoy, ſo that they have no reliſh of them. We have a remarkable Inſtance of that in *Haman*, who, tho' he abounded in all the Greatneſs and Felicity of the World, yet his Malice to a poor Foreigner, *Mordecai*, kept him from taſting Contentment in them: *All this availeth me nothing,* ſays he, *ſo long as I ſee Mordecai the Jew, ſitting*

*at the King's Gate.* On the other hand, a peaceable Spirit, that can quietly pass by all Injuries and Affronts, enjoys a continual Calm, and is above the Malice of his Enemies. Let them do what they can, they cannot rob him of his Quiet; he is firm as a Rock, which no Storms or Winds can move, when the furious and revengeful Man is like a Wave, which the least Blast tosses and tumbles from its Place. Besides this inward Disquiet of revengeful Men, they often bring many outward Calamities upon themselves; they exasperate their Enemies, and provoke them to do them greater Mischiefs; nay, they often willingly run themselves upon the greatest Miseries in pursuit of their Revenge, to which 'tis common to see Men expose Goods, Ease, Credit, Life, and even Soul itself. He who usurps a Power to decide the Justice of his Cause himself, not by the Force of Truth, but the strength of his Arm, and the point of his Sword; if he falls in that horrid Dispute without repenting, (and how can he repent in the Agonies of Death?) will surely have made a Sacrifice of his Soul to the Rage of his Revenge. The terrible Consideration of hurrying our own Soul, or the Soul of one's Enemy, to the World from whence there is no Redemption, in the very Heat of a diabolical Passion, is enough to deter every thinking Creature from such cursed Pursuits of Vengeance. *A soft Answer turneth away Wrath,* says a wise Man and a King; a better Judge of the Dignity of every Man's Passion, and of his Duty to Honour, than our modern Bravos; who, like Gamesters in their Debts at Play, shew it in no other Parts of their Lives; whence they may infallibly conclude, that that Honour is false; for were it true, it wou'd shine conspicuously in all their Actions. How wou'd such Men laugh at a Lesson of Meekness, which often melts an Adversary, and pacifies Anger? If an Enemy is so inhumane as not to be melted by it, the meek Person is still a Gainer; he gains an Opportunity of exercising the most Christian  
Grace

Grace of Charity and Forgiveness, by which he at once obeys God, and imitates the Example of our Saviour. He gains an Accession, an Increase to his Reward hereafter, the Expectation and Belief of which is alone a Delight infinitely more ravishing than the present Enjoyment of all sensual Pleasure can be.

The Prayer our Redeemer has left us, enjoins us to *forgive the Trespases of others, as we hope to be ourselves forgiven.* A Consideration, which, methinks, shou'd affright us into Good-nature; if it does not, our Malice is greater to ourselves than to our Enemies: For alas! what Hurt is it possible for you to do to one another, in comparison of what you do yourself, in losing the Pardon of your Sins? Hell and Damnation being certainly the Portion of every unpardon'd Sinner, besides all other Effects of God's Wrath in this Life. The Devil puts the Phrase in the Mouth of Men, that *Revenge is sweet*; for is it possible there can be, even in the most distemper'd Palate, any such *Sweetness* in it, as may recompense the everlasting Bitterness that attends it? No Man in his Wits can, upon sober judging, imagine there is: But alas! we give not ourselves Time to weigh things, suffering ourselves to be hurry'd away by an hasty Humour, never considering how dear we must pay for it; like the silly Bee, that in Anger leaves at once her Sting and her Life behind her; the Sting may, perhaps, give some short Pain to the Flesh it sticks in; yet surely the Bee has the worst of it, that pays her Life for so poor a Revenge. Flatter not yourselves, that there is any way for you to evade the Sentence that is past upon you, *If ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive you.* What a heavy Curse does every revengeful Person lay upon himself, when he prays to God to forgive him his Trespases, as he forgives them that trespass against him. He, in effect, begs God not to forgive him; and 'tis too sure, that part of his Prayer will be heard, he shall be forgiven, just as he forgives, that is, not at all. Christ assures us in the Parable of the

the Servant that obtain'd Forgiveness of his Lord of a vast Debt, ten thousand Talents, yet was so cruel to his Fellow-Servant, as to exact a trifling Sum of an hundred Pence; upon which his Lord recall'd his former Forgiveness, and charg'd him again with the whole Debt; *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your Hearts forgive not every Man his Brother their Trespases.* One such Act of Uncharitableness, is able to forfeit us the Pardon God has granted us, and then all our Sins return again upon us, and sink us to utter Ruin. How grateful ought we to be to the Saviour of the World, the Son of God, *Who died for us all?* And 'tis but reasonable that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him that died for us. He has earnestly recommended to us the Love of our Brethren; he does it with the most moving Arguments, drawn from the greatness of his Love to us; and what a monstrous piece of Ingratitude wou'd it be in us obstinately to refuse him so just, so moderate a Demand? which we do, if we keep any Malice or Grudge to any Person whatever. This is not only a vile Act of Unthankfulness and Ingratitude, 'tis a horrible Contempt and despising of him: This Peace and Unity of Christians, was a thing so much priz'd and valu'd by him, that when he was to leave the World, he thought it the most precious thing he cou'd bequeath; and therefore left it by way of Legacy to his Disciples, *Peace I leave with you.* We use to set a great Value on the slightest Requests of our dead Friends; and if we are so negligent of this precious Legacy of Christ, 'tis a plain Sign we want that Love and Esteem of him, which we have of our earthly Friends, and that we despise him as well as his Legacy.

What need there is of enlarging upon this Duty of Charity, is notorious to every one that lives in our Times, when Moderation, even in things of themselves indifferent, is so far from being reckon'd a Virtue, that it is declared in Places, where nothing but the heavenly Voice of Truth shou'd be always heard, to be a Sin.

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Can we have Charity without Moderation? Can we have true Zeal without Holiness? Can we be holy and not keep God's Commands, which every where enjoin *Peace, Unity, Loving-kindness, Forbearance, and whatever is contrary to a cruel and persecuting Spirit?* Nor is this Duty of Moderation inconsistent with a just Zeal for that pure Religion, in the Profession of which we were bred and live. The Purity of our own Profession shou'd make us look with Pity and Compassion at the Corruption of others; and when we pity, we shall endeavour to reform, not by Violence, but by Meekness, by all friendly and peaceable Ways prescrib'd us by the Rules of the divine Virtue and Charity.

To attain which, let us seek out for all Remedies against its Opposite, the Vice of Anger; to give them Success, they, like bodily Medicines, must be used in time; the Efficacy of 'em is lost by being us'd too late. Let the Reflexions that have been made on the Duty of Charity, prevent all Risings of Rancour and Revenge, it being much better they shou'd seem as Armour to guard, than as Balsam to cure. If this Passion be not yet subdu'd in you, be sure to take it at its very first Rise, and let not your Fancy chew, as it were, upon the Injury, by often rolling it in your Mind: Remember you please God, by passing by the Offence of your Brother; and the Devil, that Lover of Discord, by nourishing Hatred against him: Remember this, before you are inflamed; for if the Fire of Anger be thoroughly kindled, 'twill cast forth such a Smoke, as will blind your Reason, and make you unfit to judge, even in this, so very plain a Case, whether it be better, by obeying God, to purchase to yourself eternal Happiness, or by obeying Satan, eternal Misery.

From this speculative, let us proceed to practical Charity, by which the former must be approv'd. If we pretend so great Charity in the Affections, and none break out in the Actions, we may say of that Love, as St. James says of the Faith he speaks of, *that it is dead.*  
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In this Charity of the Action, we are first to endeavour the Comfort and Refreshment of our Brethren ; to desire to give them all true Cause of Joy and Chearfulness, especially when they are under any Sadness or Heaviness ; we shou'd then bring forth all the Cordials we can procure ; we shou'd labour by all Christian and fit Means, to cheer their troubled Spirits, *to comfort them that are in Heaviness*. But our most zealous Charities are to be laid out on the Souls of our Neighbours, not contenting ourselves with bare wishing them well, a sluggish sort of Kindness, unworthy those who are to imitate the great Redeemer of Souls, who did and suffer'd so much in that Purchase ; we must also add our Endeavour to make 'em what we wish them. If this Purpose were fix'd in our Minds, we shou'd find out many Opportunities of doing good to their Souls, which now we overlook. The senseless Ignorance of some wou'd call you to instruct them, and the open Sin of others, to reprove and admonish them. Every spiritual Want of our Neighbour gives an occasion of exercising some part of this Charity ; or if your Circumstances be such, that upon serious Reflexion, you think it in vain to attempt any thing yourself on account of your Meanness, small Acquaintance, or any the like Impediment, which might render your Exhortation fruitless ; yet if you are industrious in your Charity, you may probably find out some other Instrument by whom to do it more successfully. There cannot be a nobler Study than how to benefit Mens Souls ; therefore, when the direct Means are improper, 'tis fit we should diligently set ourselves to search after others. And after all our Endeavours, if the Obstinacy of Men do not suffer us, or themselves, to reap any Fruit from them ; if all our Intreaties of them to have Mercy on their Souls, will not work upon them, we must, however, continue to exhort them by Example. *Let thy Soul weep in secret for them, and let Rivers of Waters run down thine Eyes, because they keep not God's Law.* Christ himself wept over them *who would not know the things that*

*that belonged to their Peace.* When no Importunities have any Effect, even then cease not to importune God for them. *Samuel*, when he cou'd not dissuade the People from the sinful Purpose they were upon, profess that he wou'd, notwithstanding, continue praying for them, which he thought to be so much a Duty, that 'twou'd be a Sin for him to omit it. *God forbid that I shou'd sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you;* nor shall we need to fear that our Prayers will be quite lost; for if they prevail not for those, for whom we pour them out; yet, as the Psalmist says, they will return into our own Bosoms.

This Charity to the Souls of Men began to shine out some Years ago, under the Protection of our late gracious Sovereign *Queen Mary*, now reigning in Heaven; a Princess eminently distinguish'd from all others of her exalted Rank, by her extensive Charity to Mens Souls: In her was seen conspicuously the Beauty of the now despised Virtue of Moderation, and her bright Example was imitated by all who were so happy as to behold it. The Societies which were set up to reform Manners, receiv'd all kind of Encouragement from her Piety and Bounty, and there appear'd, while she liv'd, a pure disinterested Spirit of Charity, which has since sunk into a Spirit of Pride, Profit and Vexation. It is to be hop'd, that so good a Design will recover its Reputation, by being espous'd by Men of Wisdom and Virtue, whose Examples will do more towards making others good, than the Force of Laws and Spitefulness of Persecution, which are only for the Incurable, where Reproof is in vain. To pretend Charity for the Souls of others, and to have none for our own, is like running to quench our Neighbour's House when 'tis on Fire, and leave our own burning. Those who do not reprehend, but insult their wicked Brethren, who wou'd not mend but punish them, are Reformers who want to be themselves reform'd: and it is not by such that we expect to have Charity recommended and practis'd.

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Tho' we are to prefer the Souls of Men to their Bodies in the Exercise of this Virtue, yet the latter is by no means to be neglected, and Charity cannot be perfect where it does not take in both. We are not only to have Compassion on their Pains, we must do what we can for their Ease and Relief; 'tis not good Wishes, nor good Words neither, that avail in such Cases. *If a Brother or Sister, says St. James, be naked and destitute of daily Food, and one of you say unto them, depart in Peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things that are needful for the Body, what doth it profit?* It surely profits them nothing in respect of their Bodies, and will profit you as little in respect of your Souls. This relieving of the bodily Wants of our Brethren, is a thing so strictly requir'd of us, that we find it set down as an Article which we shall be call'd to account for at the last Day; and those who have omitted it, shall have this dreadful Sentence pronounc'd against them, *Depart from me ye Cursed into everlasting Fire, for you fed not the Hungry, you gave not drink to the Thirsty, you harboured not the Stranger, you clothed not the Naked, nor visited the Sick and Imprison'd.* These are common and ordinary Exercises of Charity, for which we cannot want frequent Opportunities; but besides these, there may sometimes, by God's special Providence, fall into our Hands, Occasions of doing other good Offices to the Bodies of our Neighbours. We may sometimes find a wounded Man, with the Samaritan, and then 'tis our Duty to do as he did: We may sometimes find an innocent Person condemn'd to death, as *Susannab* was, and then are, with *Daniel*, to use all possible Endeavours for his Deliverance; which is the Case *Solomon* seems to refer to, when he tells us, *If thou forbear to deliver him that is drawn unto Death, and them that are ready to be slain: If thou sayest, behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the Heart consider? And he that keepeth the Soul, doth not he know it? Shall not he render to every Man according to his Deeds?* We are not  
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lightly to put off the Matter with vain Excuses, but to remember, that God, who knows our most secret Thoughts, will severely examine whether we have willingly omitted the Performance of such a Charity. Sometimes again, and God knows, too often now-a-days, we may see a Man, that by a Course of Intemperance, is in danger to destroy his Health, to shorten his Life, and then it is due Charity not only to the Soul, but to the Body also, to endeavour to draw him from it. The doing good to Mankind, seems to be so much implanted in our Nature, as we are Men, that we generally account them not only Unchristian, but Inhumane, who are void of it; and since this Command is agreeable even to Flesh and Blood, our Disobedience to it can proceed from nothing but a Stubbornness and Resistance against God who gives it.

As we are to express our Charity towards the Bodies, so are we also to do it towards the Goods or Estate of our Neighbours. To that end we must be willing to assist and further him in all honest ways of improving or preserving his Estate or Good, by any neighbourly or friendly Office: Opportunities of this kind frequently fall out; a Man may sometimes, by his Power, or Persuasion, deliver his Neighbour's Goods out of the Hands of a Thief or Oppressor: Sometimes again, by his Advice and Counsel, he may set him in a Way of thriving, or turn him from a ruinous Course. These good Offices we are to do, even to those of our Neighbours, that are more wealthy than ourselves, as well as to those that are not. For tho' Charity does not bind us to give to those that want less than ourselves; yet, whenever we can further their Profit without lessening our own Store; nay, if the Damage be but light to us, in comparison of the Advantage to them, it will become us rather to hazard that little Damage, than lose them that greater Advantage. Charity ties us more towards our poor Brother; we are there only to consider the supplying of his Wants, and not to stick at parting with what  
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is our own to relieve him, but as far as we are able, to give freely what is necessary to his Relief. If we do not thus love our Neighbour, we love not God, as St. John tells us, *Whoso hath this World's Goods, and seeth his Brother have Need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* 'Tis vain for him to pretend to love either God or Man, who loves his Money so much better, that he will see his poor Neighbour, who is a Man, and bears the Image of God, suffer all Extremities rather than part with any thing to relieve him. The Performance of this Duty is so acceptable to God, that it is call'd a *Sacrifice well pleasing to him*, and a *Sacrifice wherewith God is well pleased*. But because even Sacrifices themselves, under the Law, were often made unacceptable, by being tainted and blemish'd, it will not be improper to enquire what are the due Qualifications of this Sacrifice.

One Qualification is, that we do it in Obedience and Thankfulness to God, who has commanded us to give Alms. It being from his Bounty alone, that we receive all our Plenty, we cannot express our Gratitude in a more proper way. *Our Goodness extendeth not unto God*; the Tribute we desire to pay out of our Estates, we cannot pay to his Person; but the Poor are his Proxies and Receivers; and therefore whatever we would, by way of Thankfulness, give back to him, should be, on his Account, distributed to the needy; and he hath promis'd to accept such Charity, as shewn unto himself; *In as much as ye have done it unto one of my Brethren ye have done it to me*. Another Qualification of the Sacrifice of Charity is, that it be out of a true Love and Compassion to our Neighbour, a tender Fellow-feeling of his Wants, and Desire of his Comfort and Relief: It must also have some Respect to ourselves, and be in hope of that eternal Reward promis'd to the Performance; *Lay up your Treasure in Heaven*; by a charitable dispersing of your temporal Goods to the Poor, lay up a Stock there, to gain a Title to that endless Bliss, which God has

has promis'd to the Charitable. The Harvest of Charity is so rich, that it wou'd abundantly recompense us, tho' we shou'd, as the Apostle speaks, *bestow all our Goods to feed the Poor*; but then we must be sure we make this our sole Aim, and not propose to ourselves the Praises of Men, which in such Case will be our only Portion; *Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward*, is what Christ himself said on this Occasion: And again, *Ye have no Reward of my Father which is in Heaven*. What a miserable Exchange shall we make, if we prefer the vain Blast of Man's Breath, to the substantial and eternal Joys of Heaven!

This is a plain Reproof of all pompous Charities; The Vanity of some Men extending beyond Death itself, they wou'd be prais'd, when they are rotting in their Graves, for the Magnificence, more than the Usefulness, of their Charity: Of this kind are all stately Edifices to lodge the Poor in; the Expence of which wou'd entertain double the Numbers, and 'tis not the Convenience of those unhappy Men and Women whom they relieve which they consult, so much as the Grandeur and Appearance of their Alms; a Folly contradictory to the very Nature of the Duty. Those Charities that are given with a View of Self-interest, or out of a Spirit of Faction, as it is to be fear'd too many of our modern Charities are, shall also have their Reward in this World, and not of *our Father which is in Heaven*.

Whatever Alms we give, we must do it chearfully, *not grudgingly, or as of Necessity*. The Manner of giving adds as much Merit to the Giver as the Value of the Gift. There is no Duty more pleasant and delightful to Human Nature, unless it be where Covetousness or Cruelty have quite work'd out the Man, and put a ravenous Beast in his stead. What a ravishing Pleasure 'tis to a benign Soul, to see the Joy which a seasonable Alms brings a poor Wretch. There is certainly nothing so pleasing to a sensible Mind, as is the Pleasure  
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conceiv'd in one's pleasing another. This is the more transporting in Almsgiving, for that we know at the same time we are pleasing God as well as Man; for Man may be pleas'd with us when God is displeas'd. The most sensual Creature alive knows not how to bestow his Money on any thing that shall bring him so great a Delight; and therefore it shou'd, methinks, be no hard matter to give without *Grudging*, since the doing it with Alacrity and Chearfulness, affords so much Pleasure to ourselves.

It may be objected, by those whose Hearts are set on the *Mammon of Unrighteousness*, as well as by those who do not abound in the things of this World, that the danger of Impoverishing one's self by what one gives, may take off the Sweetness of this delightful Act, and make Men rather not give at all, or not so chearfully. Now, were this Hazard never so apparent, yet it being the Command of God that we shall thus give, we are yet to obey chearfully, and be as well content to part with our Goods, in pursuance of this Duty, as we are many times called to do upon some other: In which Case our Saviour tells us, *He that forsakes not all that he hath, cannot be his Disciple*. Besides, God has particularly promis'd the contrary to the Charitable, that it shall bring Blessings on them, even in these outward things, *The liberal Soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself*. Again, *He that giveth to the Poor shall not lack*: And again, *He that giveth to the Poor lendeth to the Lord; that which he hath given will he pay him again*. 'Tis thought a great Disparagement amongst Men, when we refuse to trust them; it shews we either think them not sufficient, or not honest. How vile an Affront is it then to God thus to distrust him? How horrid Blasphemy, to doubt the Security of that, for which he has thus expressly past his Word? he who is the Lord of all, and therefore cannot be insufficient; he who is the God of Truth, and therefore will not fail to perform his Promise. God be-  
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comes Surety for your poor Brethren; if they cannot repay you, God, the Giver of all Good, will assuredly do it: And whatever you thus give, is so far from being Damage to you, that it is your great Advantage. Your dispersing abroad, and giving to the Poor is really a laying up in Store for yourselves. What so prudent Course can we take for our Wealth, as to put it out of the Reach of those innumerable Accidents, by which a rich Man may in an instant be, like *Job*, reduced to Beggary? By this lending it to the Lord, we may be sure to find it ready at our greatest Need, and that too with Improvement and Increase; in which respect it is, that St *Paul* compares Alms to Seed, whose Nature it is to multiply and increase, and so do all our Acts of Mercy; they return not single to us, but bring in their Sheaves with them, a most plenteous Harvest.

Let not this give Countenance to a certain Extravagance of Alms, which the misguided Zeal of some well-meaning Christians is apt to run into; they give to the Poor abroad plentifully, while they neglect the Poor at home; they are inquisitive after the Necessities of other Families, and careless of the Wants of their own; he who acts thus, is *worse than an Infidel*; we must give with Discretion as well as with Chearfulness; we must measure other Mens Wants by our own Ability to relieve them; and remember, that of those to whom much is not given, much will not be requir'd.

In distributing our Alms, we shou'd take care to do it seasonably. 'Tis true indeed there are some so poor, an Alms can never come out of Season, because they always want: yet even to them, there may be some special Season of doing it to their greater Advantage. For an Alms may, sometimes, not only deliver a poor Man from present Extremity, but by a right timing of it, may set him in some way of a more comfortable Subsistence afterward. It is generally a good Rule to dispense what we intend to any, as soon as may be, Delays being often hurtful to them and ourselves; it is  
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surely so to them, the more we prolong their groaning under their present Want; and after we have design'd them a Relief, 'tis in some degree a Cruelty to defer bestowing of it: Whatever we intend them for their greater Comfort, they lose so much of it, as the Time of the Delay amounts to. In respect to ourselves, 'tis ill to defer it, for thereby we give Advantage to the Temptation either of the Devil, or our own covetous Humour, to dissuade us from it. It fares thus too often with many Christian Duties, for want of a speedy Execution, our Purposes cool, and never come to act: Thus many resolve they will repent, but because they set not immediately about it, one Delay succeeds another, and keeps them from ever repenting at all.

What we give, let us give prudently also as well as seasonably, where it is most needy, and may do the Receiver most good: If we give at all Adventures, to all that seem to want, we may sometimes give more to those whose Sloth and Lewdness is the Cause of their Want, than to those who deserve it; and so both encourage the one in their Idleness, and disable ourselves from giving to the other: Yet, 'tis not to be doubted, but that the present Wants of the most unworthy, may be such as makes it our Duty to relieve them; but where no such pressing Need is, we shall do best to choose out the fitter Objects of Charity: Those who either are not able to labour, or else have a greater Charge than their Labour can maintain. To such we should so give our Alms, as may be most likely to do them good; the manner of which may differ according to the Circumstances of their Condition. To some it may be best to give them by little and little; to others, the giving all at once may tend more to their Benefit; and sometimes a seasonable Loan may do as well as a Gift, which one may be able to part with for a time, and not so well able to give it absolutely. It ceases to be Charity if we lend to receive Use; the Charitable Lender must resolve, if his Debtor should prove unable  
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to pay, to forgive so much of the Principal as his Needs require, and the Creditor's Abilities will permit. They want much of this Charity who throw their poor Debtors into Jail, when they know they have nothing to answer the Debt: A great Act of Cruelty, to make another miserable, when nothing is gained to ourselves by it. Another necessary Qualification of Charity, is to give liberally, not such pitiful Scantlings as will bring no Relief to the Receiver, for that is a kind of Mockery. As if one shou'd pretend to feed a Man, who is almost famish'd, by giving him a Crumb of Bread; such Doles as that would be most ridiculous; yet I fear 'tis too near the Proportion of some Mens Alms. *He that has two Coats shou'd impart to him that has none.* John the Baptist did not say, He that has a great Wardrobe, but even he that has but two Coats, must part with one of them. The Primitive Christian Converts gave all to the Use of the Brethren, which tho' it be no Measure of our constant Practice, yet it shews us how fundamental a Part of Christianity this Charity is, that at the very founding of the Church of Christ, it was practis'd to such vast Degrees. The Gospel carries this Christian Love so far, as to lay down our Lives for the Brethren; and can we imagine that we are commanded to be so prodigal of our Lives, and are allow'd to be sparing of our Goods?

The Example of our Saviour can never be too often urg'd on this Occasion. *For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, says St. Paul, who, tho' he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye thro' his Poverty might be rich.* He empty'd himself of all that Glory and Greatness he enjoy'd in Heaven with his Father; and submitted himself to a Life of such Meanness and Poverty, only to enrich us: For Shame then, let us not grudge to empty our Coffers, to lessen somewhat of our Heaps, for the Relief of his poor Members. Be liberal to the Needy here, if you hope that God shall be liberal to you of his Happiness hereafter. *He that soweth sparingly*

*ingly, shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.* What the Proportion is that may be call'd a liberal giving, I shall not undertake to determine, there being Degrees even in Liberality; which is to be measur'd, not so much by what is given, as by the Ability of the Giver. A Man of a mean Estate may give less than one of a great, and yet be the more liberal Person, because that little may be more out of his, than the greater is out of the other's. The poor Widow is declar'd by Christ, to have given more to the Treasury than all the rich Men; not that her two Mites were more than their rich Gifts, but that it was more for her, she having left nothing behind; whereas they gave out of their Abundance what they might easily spare. Every Man must herein judge for himself. Tho' St. Paul earnestly presses the *Corinthians* to Bounty, yet he prescribes not to them how much they shall give, which he leaves to their own Breasts, *Every Man, according as he purposeth in his Heart, so let him give.* For the due Performance of this Charity, the Advice of the same Apostle to the same People, may be our Guide; *Upon the first Day of the Week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prosper'd him.* By giving little and little the Expence wou'd become less sensible; and it wou'd be a Means to prevent those Grudgings and Repinings, which are apt to attend Men in great Disbursements. As a Man's Gains arise, which it will be convenient for him to examine Weekly on other Accounts also, he will best know how to regulate his Almsgiving; and when he finds how God has from time to time blest him in his Industry, it will then be grateful and seasonable in him, to lay by a Portion of it for his Benefactor, to whom he certainly returns it when he gives to the Poor. Those who cannot reckon their weekly gains, who take longer Spaces of time to settle the State of their Profits and Losses, may take also longer Spaces for *laying by ths Store* for Charitable Uses: No certain Space can be prescrib'd, nor can there  
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hardly be any time out of Season : But that somewhat thou'd be laid by, rather than left loose to our sudden Charities, is sure very expedient ; and I doubt not, whoever makes trial of it, will, upon Experience, acknowledge it to be so.

As to the Exercise of our Charity with respect to our Neighbour's Credit ; many are the Occasions we may have for it, as well towards the Guilty as towards the Innocent. If a Man, whom we know to be innocent, be slander'd and traduc'd, Charity obliges us to do what we may, for the declaring his Innocency, and delivering him from that false Imputation, not only by witnessing when we are call'd to it, but by a voluntary offering our Testimony in his Behalf ; or if it is not in a judicial Way, and the Slander be only tost from one to another, by taking all Occasions publickly to declare what we know of his Innocency : Yet how are we forc'd of late to be upon our guard, for fear of giving Offence, by declaring too publickly what we know of the Innocence of those whom Scandal has assaulted in the most outrageous Manner ! Tho' it be a Duty upon us to defend the good Name of our Neighbour, yet we may not in some Cases discharge our Consciences. There never was a time when Calumny was so prevalent ; never did Slander so triumph ; and encourag'd by its Success, it has not spar'd the most Innocent, and the most Worthy. Those are little acquainted with this Virtue of Charity, who delight in, or countenance Scandal, not only against the Innocent, but in many Cases, against the Guilty also. Sometimes their Fault may be conceal'd, if it be such, that no other part of Charity to others makes it necessary to discover it ; or if it be not so notorious, as that it will be sure to betray itself.

The Wounds of Reputation are of all others the most incurable ; and it may therefore well become Christian Charity to prevent them, even where they have been deserv'd ; perhaps such a Tendernefs in hiding the Fault,

may sooner bring the Offender to Repentance, if it be seconded, as it ought to be, with all the Earnestness of private Admonition. If the Fault be such that it is not to be conceal'd, yet still there may be room for this Charity in extenuating and lessening it as far as the Circumstances will bear ; as if it were done suddenly and rashly, Charity will allow some Abatement of the Censure, which wou'd belong to a design'd and deliberate Act. The most frequent Exercises of this Charity happen towards those, of whose either Innocence or Guilt we have no Knowledge. 'Tis the Property of Love, not to think Evil, and to judge the best ; we shou'd therefore abstain from uncharitable Conclusions of them ourselves, and as much as lies in us, keep others from them also ; for our Neighbour's Credit, which we shou'd endeavour to preserve, is often as much shaken by unjust Suspicion, as it wou'd be by the truest Accusation. *Judge not, that ye be not judged*, is a very plain Precept, and attended with a Threat, which shou'd make us tremble at the Thoughts of doing an Injustice to another's Reputation ; for if to think ill of them be forbidden, what must it be to speak ill ? If to suspect be criminal, what is to accuse ? And what will that Judgment be, with which these Dealers in Slander are threatned, but dwelling to all Eternity with the Father of Lies and Malice, the Devil and his Angels ? Such, as sure as there is a God in Heaven, will be the Punishment, without Repentance, of all those, who out of Wantonness of Wit, or perhaps baser Inducements, to please and flatter those they address, do blacken the Reputation of others, not only with wicked Suggestions, but foul and positive Assertions. It will be paid home to them, and to all that gave Encouragement to them, in the strict and severe Judgment of God.

Let us now consider Charity as it has respect to Justice : All the Parts of it may indeed be rank'd under that Head ; it being, by Christ's Command, become a Debt to our Brethren ; and to pay our Debts is most surely

surely a part of Justice : But because in common use we distinguish between the Offices of Justice and Charity, we will enlarge a little on those charitable Acts, which have Reference to the former. Men look upon their Acts of Mercy, as things purely voluntary, which they have no Obligation to. Upon this Score they are apt to think very high of themselves, when they have perform'd any, tho' never so mean ; but never blame themselves, tho' they omit all. What they think they may either do or not, without committing a Sin, if they do it, must, in their Opinion, be very meritorious. They do not remember, that it is injoin'd us *to love our Neighbour as ourselves*, and that we are not left to our own Choice in the matter. This is the Standard by which we are to measure all our Actions which relate to others : Wherefore, when any Necessity of your Neighbour's presents itself to you, ask yourself, whether, if you were in the like Case, your Love to yourself wou'd not make you industrious for Relief ? and then, whether your love to your Neighbour must have the same Effect for him ? St. *James* calls this the *Royal Law*, and there is more Humanity in it, than in all the refin'd Notions of Philosophy. All who profess themselves Subjects to Christ, must be rul'd by his Law ; and whoever is so rul'd, will not fail of performing all Charities to others, because it is sure he wou'd, upon the like Occasions, have all such perform'd to himself. There is none but wishes to have his good Name defended, his Poverty reliev'd, his bodily Sufferings succour'd ; only it may be said, that in the spiritual Wants, there are some so careless of themselves, that they wish no Supply, they desire no Reproofs, no Instructions ; nay, they are angry when they are given them ; which may make it seem, that such are not bound by this Law to those Charities. But this Love of ourselves, which is set as the Measure of that to our Neighbour is to be understood to be that reasonable Love which Men ought to have ; and tho' a Man fail of that due Love

he owes himself, yet his Neighbour has not forfeited his Right by it. He has still a Claim to such a Degree of our Love as is answerable to that, which in Right we shou'd bear to ourselves. And none can doubt but the Care of our spiritual Welfare is what we are bound to be solicitous for. Neither will the despising our own Souls absolve us from Charity to other Mens.

A very useful and benign Branch of Charity is that of Arbitrament and Peace-making among others. This is beneficial both to the Souls, Bodies, Goods, and Credit of our Brethren ; the restoring of Amity, and reconciling of Enemies, is a most blessed Work, which brings always a Blessing on the Actors. *Blessed are the Peacemakers*: Christ assur'd us of it, and we may be encourag'd by it diligently to lay hold of all Opportunities to do this Office of Charity, to use all our Art, and endeavour to make up all Grudges and Quarrels among our Neighbours. We must not only labour to restore Peace where it is lost, but to preserve it where it is, by striving to beget in the Hearts of all we converse with a true Value of that most precious Jewel, Peace, and by a timely Prevention of those Jars and Unkindnesses we see likely to fall out. It will often be in the Power of a discreet Friend or Neighbour to cure those Mistakes and Misunderstandings, which are the first Beginnings of Quarrels and Contentions ; and it will be both more easy and more profitable, thus to prevent than pacify Strifes. When a Quarrel is once broken out, 'tis like a violent Flame, which cannot so soon be quenched, as it might have been, while it was but a smothering Fire. It also prevents many Sins, which, in the Progress of an open Contention, are almost sure to be committed. *In the multitude of Words there wanteth not Sin*, says Solomon ; which cannot be more truly said of any sort of Words, than those that pass in Anger ; tho' the Quarrel be afterwards compos'd, yet those Sins still remain on their Account, and it is therefore a great Charity to prevent them.

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To fit a Man for this excellent Office of Peace-making, it is necessary he be first remarkably peaceable himself; for with what Face can you persuade others to that which you will not perform yourself? Or how can you expect your Persuasions will have any Effect? There is one point of Peaceableness which seems to be little regarded among Men, and that is the case of legal Trespases. Men think it nothing to go to Law about every petty Trifle, and do not imagine there can be any Blame in them, as long as they have the Law on their side; but surely had we that true Peaceableness of Spirit which we ought, we should be unwilling, for such slight Matters, to trouble and disquiet our Neighbours. Not that all going to Law is utterly unchristian, but such kind of Suits are certainly so, as are grounded upon Contentiousness and Stoutness of Stomach, to defend an inconsiderable Right, or to avenge a small Trespas. In greater Matters, he that parts with some of his Right, for love of Peace, does surely the most christianly, and most agreeably to the advice of the Apostle, *Rather to take wrong, and suffer ourselves to be defrauded.*

How do those then dishonour their most holy Profession, who having the Care of the Souls of a Flock committed to their Charge, instead of maintaining Peace among them, instead of setting them a pious Example of Amity and Gentleness, are continually persecuting them with litigious Suits about their inconsiderable Dues, and spoil all the hopes of Harvest from the Seed they sow among them. In the Prosecutions of which, too many of them, not only take the most vexatious means of Prosecution, but also carry themselves towards them with so much Haughtiness and Sullenness, that many of the Sheep have gone astray, purely on account of their sullen and haughty Shepherd. 'Tis true, worldly Men are so apt to defraud them of those Dues which their Avarice grudges them, that Law will sometimes be necessary; yet even then, they, and all others, shou'd take care of preserving Peace by carrying a friendly and christian Temper towards

the Parties they contend with, in a legal way, not suffering their Hearts to be at all estranged from them, by being willing to yield to any reasonable terms of Agreement, whenever they shall be offer'd. Those that do not carry this temper of Mind in their Suits, cannot be reconcileable to that Peaceableness, so strictly requir'd of all Christians, who own themselves to be the Servants of him whose Title is the *Prince of Peace*.

It remains to treat of the Charity of the Actions, with respect to the extent of it, which must take in not only Strangers, but reach out also its affectionate Arms to the bitterest of our Enemies. We have seen that it is our Duty to forgive them, and when we have once forgiven, we can then no longer account them Enemies ; after which, it will be no hard matter, even to Flesh and Blood, to do all kind things to them. Indeed this is the way by which we must try the Sincerity of our Forgiveness. 'Tis easy to say, I forgive such a Man ; but if when an opportunity of doing him good is offer'd, you decline it, 'tis apparent there yet lurks the old Malice in your Heart. Where there is a thorough Forgiveness, there will be as great a Readiness to benefit an Enemy as a Friend, and perhaps, in some respects, a greater : A true charitable Person, looking upon it as an essential Prize, when he has an opportunity of evidencing the truth of his Reconciliation, and obeying the precept of his Saviour, by doing good to them that hate him. If we could perform these acts of Kindness to Enemies in such a manner as might draw them from their Enmity, and win them to Peace, the Charity would be doubled. This we shou'd aim at, for that we see the Apostle sets at the end of the before-mention'd Acts of feeding, &c. that we may *heap coals of Fire on their Heads* ; not Coals to burn them, but to melt them into all Love and Tendernefs towards us.

Nothing is so necessary to the just Performance of this Virtue of Charity, as the turning out of our Hearts that Self-Love which so often possesses them, and so wholly too, that it leaves no room for Charity, nay, nor Justice  
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neither, to our Neighbour. By this Self-Love, I mean not that true Love of ourselves, which is the love and care of our Souls, for that wou'd certainly help, not hinder us, in this Duty ; but I mean that immoderate Love of our own worldly Interests and Advantages, which is apparently the root of all, both Injustice and Uncharitableness, towards others. The Apostle sets this sin of Self-Love in the head of a whole troop of Sins, as if it were some principal Officer in the Devil's Camp, and certainly not without Reason ; for it never goes without an accursed train of many other Sins, which, like the Dragon's Tail in the *Revelations*, sweeps away all the care of Duty to others. It makes us so vehement and intent upon pleasing ourselves, that we have no regard to any body else, contrary to the direction of the same Apostle St. Paul, *To please his Neighbour for his Good to Edification ;* which he backs with the example of Christ, *For even Christ pleased not himself.* The virtue of Charity will not live in that Breast where Self-love dwells, it must be weeded out, for 'tis impossible they shou'd prosper together. But when we have remoy'd this Hindrance, we must remember that this, as all other Graces, proceeds not from ourselves. It is the gift of God, and therefore we must earnestly pray to him to work it in us, to send his holy Spirit, which once appear'd in the form of a Dove, a meek and galleſs Creature, to frame our Hearts to the same Temper, and enable us rightly to perform this Duty, so pleasing in itself, so useful to Mankind, so acceptable to God, that we cannot lengthen out our Reflexions upon it too far: So copious is the Subject, so important the Duty to our Happiness in this World, as well as in the next.

Mercy without Alms is part of this Virtue, when the Person is disabled to expreſs outwardly what he heartily deſires ; but Alms without Mercy is like Prayers without Devotion, or Religion without Humanity.

Mercy and Alms are the Body and Soul of Charity, and what we muſt pay to our Neighbour's Need : God has

injoin'd this Precept to the World, that the great Inequality he was pleased to suffer in Mens Possessions might be reduced to some Temper and Evenness, and the most miserable Person be reconcil'd to some Sense and Participation of Felicity. To know what are the works of Mercy, one need only remember the Scripture Rule of clothing the Naked, and the like; to which a learned Prelate of our Church has added, *To bury the Dead, to give Physick to the Sick, to bring cold and starv'd People to Warmth and to the Fire; for sometimes Clothing will not do it; or this may be done when we cannot do the other. To lead the Blind in right ways, to lend Money, to forgive Debts, to remit Forfeitures, to mend High-Ways and Bridges, to reduce or guide wandering Travellers, to ease their Labours, by accommodating their Work with apt Instruments, or their Journey with Beasts of Carriage: To deliver the Poor from their Oppressors, to die for your Brother, to pay Maidens Dowries, and to procure for them honest and chaste Marriages.* There are also works of spiritual Alms: As, *To teach the ignorant, to counsel doubting Persons, to admonish Sinners diligently, prudently, seasonably, and charitably; to which also may be reduced provoking and encouraging to good Works, to comfort the Afflicted, to pardon Offenders, to succour and support the Weak, to pray for all Estates of Men, and for relief of all their Necessities; to which may be added, To punish or correct Refractoriness, to be gentle in censuring the Actions of others; to establish the scrupulous, wavering and inconstant Spirits; to confirm the Strong, not to give Scandal; to quit a Man of his Fear, to redeem Maidens from Prostitution.* To all which he adds, *reconciling Enemies, erecting publick Schools of Learning, maintaining Lectures of Divinity, erecting Colleges of Religion and Retirement from the Noises and more frequent Temptations of the World; finding Employment for unbusy'd Persons, and putting Children to honest Trades.* To which may be objected, That the Erection of Monasteries for Retirement, which the good Bishop calls *Colleges of Religion*, having by long Experience been found not to be free from Temptations, and besides,

fides, hindering People from discharging the social Duties of Life ; such sort of Charities are with Reason exploded since the Reformation, and there is more Superstition than Religion in those that would restore them. If such new Foundations were erected, might not one well demand, Why were the old ones destroy'd ? Wou'd it not render the Alienation of vast Revenues, by the Laws of the Land, to be as bad as Sacrilege ? And when Men are once convinced of the Wickedness of detaining them, it will not be long before they will be restor'd ; which is plain enough aim'd at, in the Bishop's admonishing all good Christians to erect such Colleges. As for us, if we have Regard to those other Duties of Charity, we may very well leave the care of those religious Convents to the Publick ; what more immediately concerns us, is to be mindful not to give in Alms that which is none of our own. How absurd, how unjust are those magnificent Charities, which are raised out of Extortion and Injustice ? What is not yours is due to the Owners, not to the Poor. Every Man has need of his own, and that is the first to be provided for ; after which you must think of the needs of the Poor. He who gives to the Poor what is not his own, makes himself a *Thief*, and the poor *Receivers*. However, this is not to be understood as if it were unlawful for a Man, who is not able to pay his Debts, to give smaller Alms to the Poor. He may not give such Portions as may any way disable him to do Justice, but what, if it was sav'd, cou'd not help him in doing it. He may here do a little, since he cannot in the other Duty do much. If we descend so low as Rogues and Robbers, their Alms may also be regularly distributed. If they cannot tell the Persons whom they have injur'd, or adjust the several Proportions : In those Cases they are to give the unknown Portions to the Poor, by way of Restitution ; for it cannot well be called Alms. God is the supreme Lord to whom such *Escheats* devolve, and the Poor are his *Receivers*.

We may and ought to give Alms of Money unjustly taken, and yet voluntarily parted with : Of this kind is what is taken for false Witness, Bribes, Simoniackal Contracts, because the Receiver has no right to keep it, nor the Giver any right to recal it ; it is unjust Money, and payable to none but the supreme Lord, who is the Person injur'd, and to his delegates the Poor. If the Person injur'd by the unjust Sentence of a brib'd Judge, or by false Witness, be poor, he is the proper Object to whom the Restitution is then to be made. There is some sort of Gain that has no Injustice in it, properly so call'd ; but it is unlawful and filthy Lucre, such as is Money taken for Work done unlawfully on the Lord's Day, Hire taken by Players and Buffoons, the Wages of Harlots, and the like. Of this Money some Preparation is to be made, before it be given in Alms : 'Tis infected with the Plague, and must pass through the Fire or the Water before it be fit for Alms ; the Person must repent, and leave the Crime, or his very Charity will favour of the Infection.

He who gives Alms out of Custom, or to upbraid the Poverty of the other, or to make him mercenary and oblig'd, or with any unhandsom Circumstances, does not do it in Mercy, nor out of a true Sense of the Calamity of his Brother, he feels nothing of it himself, which he ought to do before he can well discharge himself in the the practice of this Virtue.

He who does not seek the praise of Men, may give his Dole either in publick or private ; for our Saviour intended only to provide against Hypocrisy, when he made Alms to be given in secret : It being otherwise one of his Commandments, *That our Light shou'd shine before Men*. This is more excellent, that is more safe. We must, according to our Ability, give to all Men that need, and, in equal needs, give first to good Men rather than to bad Men ; and if the needs be unequal, do so too, provided that the need of the poorest be not violent and extreme ; but if an evil Man be in extreme  
Necessity,

Necessity, he is to be reliev'd rather than a good Man, who can tarry longer, and may subsist without it. If he be a good Man, he will desire it shou'd be so, because himself is bound to save the life of his Brother with doing some Inconvenience to himself, and no difference of Virtue or Vice can make the Ease of one Beggar equal with the Life of another.

To vicious Persons we should give no Alms, if such Alms will support their Sin; as if they will continue in Idleness, *If they will not work neither let them eat*, if they will spend it in Drunkenness or Wantonness. When such Persons are reduc'd to very great Want, they must be reliev'd in such Proportions as may not relieve their dying Lust, but may refresh their faint or dying Bodies.

Poor House-Keepers that labour hard, and are burden'd with many Children, are the best objects of Charity; or Gentlemen fallen into sad Poverty, especially if by innocent Misfortune; tho' if their Crimes brought them into it, they are to be deliver'd according to the former Rule. Persecuted Persons, Widows, and fatherless Children, are equal objects of Charity; the former to be assisted and reliev'd, and the latter to be put to honest Trades and Schools of Learning. Search into the Wants of numerous and meaner Families, there being many Persons that have nothing left them but Misery and Modesty. Towards such we must add two Circumstances of Charity, to enquire them out, and convey ourselves to them, in such a manner, as not to make them ashamed.

In Giving, look for nothing again; have no consideration of future Advantages; give to Children, to old Men, to the Unthankful, to the Dying, and those you shall never see again. For else your Alms or Courtesy is not Charity, but Traffick and Merchandise. Be sure that you omit not to relieve the needs of your Enemy and the Injurious; you may possibly win him to yourself, but your Intention shou'd be to win him to God.

Trust not your Alms to uncertain Under-Dispensers. In avoiding which you secure your Alms in the right Channel.

Channel, and have the Pleasure of doing yourself the *Labour of Love*.

Whatever is superfluous in your Estate is to be dispens'd with in Alms; but that is not to be reckon'd superfluous which is necessary to maintain the decency of our Rank and Person, not only in present Needs, but in all future Necessities, and very probable Contingencies, but no farther: We are not oblig'd beyond this, unless we see very great, publick, and calamitous Necessities. But yet, if we do extend beyond our Measure, and give more than we are able, we shou'd but imitate the zealous Examples of the first Christians, who brought their All into the publick Stock: Examples however, that are not set us so much for our Imitation, living under Constitutions, and the State of Christianity being alter'd, as for our Admiration. All Christians should not be nice and curious, fond and indulgent to themselves in taking Accounts of their personal Conveniencies, they should make their Estimate moderate and easy, according to the Order and Manner of Christianity, and then the Consequence wou'd be, that the Poor would be more plentifully reliev'd, they themselves would be the more able to do it, and they would be able to give the more comfortable Account of their Stewardship in the Day of the Lord Jesus. Superfluous Servants, unnecessary Feasts, costly Apparel, imprudent Law-Suits, vain Journeys, should be retrench'd for this purpose.

This is only intended as Advice in the Matter: For many of these Superfluities are permitted in Princes, Noblemen, and others, according to their Ranks and Fortunes: To have variety of Clothes, particularly, as it is a mark of Magnificence, so it may be an occasion of Charity, by giving them, as rewards to Servants, or in Alms to their wanting Neighbours. It ceases to be Charity, when by doing this they minister to the Vanity or Luxury of others, or when all is consum'd on their own Lusts.

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He who plays at any Game, must resolve beforehand to be indifferent whether he wins or loses. If he gives what he wins to the Poor, he will do well, provided his Game does not provoke him to Anger, and he neither wastes too much Time upon it, nor tempts his Neighbour to do it, or to lose more than is convenient for him, or suitable to his Circumstances. Indeed it were better yet, if he would lay by so much as he is willing to give, without playing at all; there being no kind of Game but what carries too much Temptation with it, and can hardly be delighted in without Sin.

To fast sometimes, is not only a Duty in us on our own Accounts, and for our Souls sake, 'tis also requir'd of us on account of our Brother; if we will not fast that he may eat, we shou'd die for him. We hear of very high and over-righteous Strains of Charity practis'd by some in former Ages, when Popish Superstition rais'd the Merit of outward Works almost as high as the merit of our Saviour's Death; and thereby tempted many to go farther and to do more than was requir'd from them.

We have a sure word of Prophecy to direct us, and farther than that bids us we need not go, and that teaches us to be discreet as well as fervent in Charity. When we give Alms to Beggars, and Persons of that low Rank, it is better to give little to each, that we may give to the more. But in religious Charities, in supplying the accidental Needs of decay'd Persons, fallen from great Affluence to great Indigence, 'tis better to unite than to disperse our Alms, to make a noble Relief to a Man, and restore Comfort to him, than to support only his natural Wants, and keep him alive only, unrescu'd from sad Discomfort.

Tho' the Precept of Alms binds not indefinitely to all kinds of Charity, yet he who delights to feed the Poor, and spends all his Portion that way, is not bound to enter into Prisons, and redeem Captives; but we are oblig'd by the present Circumstances, the special disposition of Providence, and the misery of an Object, to this or that particular

particular act of Charity. The Eye is the sense of Mercy, the Heart the Organ of Compassion. When we have a moving Object present to our Eye, the Heart will be touch'd with Pity if our Breasts be humane; and we may be sure, that whoever is in our Sight, or in our Neighbourhood, and in distressed Circumstances, is fallen into the Lot of our Charity.

Those who have no Money may have Mercy. They are bound to pity the Poor, and to pray for them. Be your Charity little or great, corporal or spiritual, the Charity of Alms or the Charity of Prayers, a cup of Wine or a cup of Water, if it be but *Love* to the Brethren, or a Desire to help all or any poor Christians, it shall be accepted according to what a Man hath, not according to what he hath not. Love is all this, and all the other Commandments; it will express itself where it can, and where it cannot, the one by good Gifts, the other by good Wishes.

When we consider how great a Blessing it is, that we are not ourselves reduced to the Necessity of receiving Alms, it is a ready Instance of our Thankfulness to God, to give them for his sake. Charity is one of the Wings of Prayer, by which it flies to the Throne of Grace: It crowns all the works of Piety; it causes Thanksgiving to God in our behalf, and the Poor to bless us and pray for us: It is like the effusion of Oil on the Woman of *Sidon*, as long as she pours into empty Vessels it could never cease running; or like the Widows Barrel of Meal, it consumes not as long as she fed the Prophet. The Sum of all is contain'd in the Words of our Saviour, *Give Alms of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you*: Let us therefore so perform our Alms, that like Curls of holy Incense they may ascend to Heaven, and breathe a sweet-smelling Savour into the Nostrils of God; for 'tis by this alone they are consecrated into an acceptable Sacrifice to him, and render'd true Piety and Devotion: Whereas if we give our Alms merely to be seen of Men, or to serve our worldly Interest, they proceed

ceed not from Mercy, but Self-love. They are a sordid Traffick for Applause and Profit, as has been already observ'd; and hence our Saviour cautions us, *Take heed that you do not your Alms before Men, to be seen of them, otherwise you have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven. Therefore when thou dost thy Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men: Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward.*

There are too many, who lay too much Stress on the outward act of Giving, and do not sufficiently regard the inward act of Mercy, which must always be attended with Justice. Some Men think to compound with Heaven, for certain Vices which they will not part with, by certain Virtues which come cheap to them. A Man of a weak Constitution flatters himself, that his Continnence and Temperance make amends for his Avarice. He who gives part of what he gets to the Poor, thinks it mends his Title to the other part, no matter how he came by it. But to do Alms is to give away something of our *own*, to remedy another's want or Misery; wherefore to give away one Man's Right to supply another's Necessity, is not so much an *Alms* as a *Robbery*. By this Rule, Debtors who owe more than they can pay, are oblig'd in Conscience, not to intrench upon their Justice by their Mercy; nor to disable them from being just to their Creditors, by being merciful to the Poor: For tho' to relieve the Poor be nakedly and abstractedly good; yet it is to be consider'd, that particular Actions are good or bad, according to the Circumstances which adhere to them; and when that Action which is nakedly good, happens to be cloth'd with an evil Circumstance, it is so far evil and unlawful; and therefore, when my relieving the Poor is accompany'd with this evil Circumstance of defrauding my Creditors of their Due, I am so far bound in Conscience not to relieve them; because if I do, I must relieve them unjustly; and we are especially to take care, that our Alms be just and righteous. It is true, those unhappy Persons, who cannot

cannot propose to themselves, to pay their Creditors any thing more of their just Debts than would almost be taken for Charity, and yet can spare so small a Dole from their own Necessities; these we have before shewn, to be under an equal Duty of helping the Needs of others, as if they did not want themselves to answer what they owe to their Creditors.

I cannot but again reflect on the Pleasure there is in the chearful Practice of this Virtue. Human Nature within us, by a kind of sympathetick Motion, exalts and raises itself up. If Mercy be the Spring of our Alms, they will flow with a free Current; because all the while I am watering others I shall feel the Refreshment of my own Streams. When we bestow our Alms with an unwilling Mind, 'tis plain it is not Mercy, but Shame, or Fear, or Importunity which moves us; there is then no Virtue in them, nor can we expect that any Reward should attend them. To contribute towards another's Relief, because we are asham'd or afraid to do otherwise, is rather paying a *Tax* than giving an *Alms*; and when nothing can be wrung out of me, but what is distrain'd by Importunity, I give not for the Poor's Relief, but for my own Peace and Quiet. What Virtue is it for a Man to give, only to get rid of a *Dan*? To render Alms virtuous they must be generous, and to deserve Reward we must expect none. They must flow, like Water from the Spring, in natural and unforced Streams, and not be pump'd from us by Importunity or Shame. That our Charity should be extensive, as well in the Portion as in the Object, we have shewn in the foregoing Pages: To which may be added, That the Design of Alms, which are the Fruits of Mercy, being to redress the Poor Man's Misery, to satisfy his craving Hunger, and rescue him from the pinching Necessities under which he groans and languishes; it measures its Alms accordingly, and proportions them to the Wants it supplies: Its aim being not only to rescue the Miserable from extreme Misery, but also, according to its Power, to render them happy. It does not think it sufficient to deliver

deliver the Needy from extreme Want and Famine, but covets also to render their Lives happy, and give them a comfortable Enjoyment of themselves: For merely to keep a Man from famishing, looks rather like a Design to prolong his Torment, and spin out the Duration of his Misery, than to contribute to his Ease and Happiness. If we intend this Happiness, as we must do, if we have a merciful Intention, we shall endeavour, not only to enable him to live, but to live comfortably, and accordingly proportion our Alms.

In times of Sickness, or scarceness of Work, in dearth of Provisions, or in the beginning of Arrests of poor Men, before the Person has devour'd them; or, after a great Loss when their Fortunes are sinking, and a small Support may keep their Head above Water: In a word, when they are young and capable of Instruction, and their Friends are not capable of disposing of them; when the placing them out to some honest Trade may prevent their turning Thieves or Beggars, and render them useful to their Relations, their Friends, and the Publick: When they are setting up with an insufficient Stock, and a little Help may encourage their Diligence; these and such like are Seasons of Alms, in which, by lending a helping Hand, we may rescue many a poor Wretch out of a deep Abyss of Misery, and make their future Condition easy and prosperous. We must not reserve our Charities to our last Will and Testament, but embrace all Opportunities while we are living, to give timely Relief to the Necessitous; otherwise we shall at our Death vainly pretend to give of our Substance, because we then can keep it no longer, and it will be only a throwing over the Lading when the Ship is ready to sink. He who defers his Alms, when proper Seasons are presented, is so far the Cause of all the consequent Calamities which the Poor suffer by the want of them; and since the Design of Alms is to relieve the Sufferings of the Poor, 'tis doubtless a Degree of Cruelty to prolong their Sufferings, by needlessly delaying to relieve them. You would think  
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her a cruel Mother, that having Bread enough and to spare, shou'd rather choose to afflict her Child with a long unsatisfy'd Hunger, than to content its craving Appetite, by giving it its Food in due Season; and sure 'tis a great Defect of Compassion unnecessarily to prolong the Sufferings of our indigent Brother, tho' it be but for a Day or an Hour, when we have a present Opportunity to relieve him. And since, whatever Relief we design him, he must necessarily lose so much of it, as the Time of our Delay amounts to; Mercy obliges us to relieve him quickly, and not suffer him to pine away while our Charity is growing.

In giving of Alms, as well as other Christian Duties, Discretion and Prudence ought to be observ'd, for thus the Royal Prophet tells us, *A good Man sheweth Favour, and lendeth, and will guide his Affairs with Discretion.* Unless then Prudence be the Dispenser of our Alms, Mercy will miss of what it aims at and designs by them, which is to do good to the Poor, to supply their Necessities, and give them a comfortable Enjoyment of themselves: Instead of which, if we do not manage ourselves with Prudence, we shall many times create Necessities by supplying them, and increase and multiply the Miseries of the World by an unskilful Endeavour to redress them. It being with Alms as with Estates, where half of the Riches consists in the Discretion of the Owner, and those very Charities which are distributed by a blind Superstition, or a foolish Pity, do many times do more hurt than good. What Harvest can the World reap from this precious Seed of our Alms, when they are sown with a careless or unskilful Hand? When they are either thrown on a Heap to useless or superstitious Purposes, or scatter'd at all Adventures, without any Distinction of the cultivated from the fallow Ground. Thus the Birds of Prey, useless Vagrants, Drones, and Beggars, devour and eat them up, while the modest, impotent, and laborious Poor, are utterly destitute and unprovided,

We ought to exercise our Prudence and Discretion in the Method of providing our Alms, in the Nature and Quality of them, as to the Proportions of them, and the manner of bestowing them. To this end, Prudence will direct us not only to be frugal in our Expences, to pare off our Superfluities, and to be diligent and industrious in our Callings, that we may have to give to them that need; but also to appropriate a certain Part of our Revenues and Profits to those pious Uses, that so we may not be to seek for Alms upon sudden and emergent Occasions, but may always have a Fund ready to supply our daily Distribution; and if we take care not to alienate and embezzle this Store, we shall always give with Chearfulness, which doubles the Value of the Charity, both as to the Pleasure we have in giving it, and the Poor in taking it.

Our Prudence is also to be exercis'd in the Choice of the Objects of our Charity, taking care that they be such as do truly need and deserve it. For unless we do so, we shall often encourage Vice instead of relieving Poverty, and be tempted by the clamorous Importunities of idle and vicious Persons, to prostitute our Alms to their Sloth and Intemperance. How frequently do we see the imprudent Charities of well disposed Minds pour'd into those Sinks of Filthiness, and, like the Sacrifices of *Bel*, devoted to the importunate Lusts of idle Beggars and Drones, that are not so properly the Members as the Wens of the Body Politick, as being utterly useless to all its natural Ends, and only serving to discover and bring Diseases upon it, drawing away the Nourishment of it from its useful Parts and Members. Now what a Shame and Pity is it that these precious Fruits of Mercy shou'd be thus abus'd and misemploy'd, to pamper a Company of devouring Vermin, whose Business it is to croke about the Streets, and wander from Door to Door, while many a poor industrious Family, that has more Mouths to feed than Hands to work, lies drooping under its Wants and Necessities?

cessities? Wherefore tho' the former are not to be altogether neglected, when their Needs are real and urgent, yet certainly Prudence will direct our Charity to such Persons as have either fallen from Riches to Poverty, and consequently are less able to toil and drudge for Bread, or else such as are either worn out by Labour, or disabled from it by Sicknefs, or oppress'd by such a numerous Charge of Children, as does exceed their utmost Industry to maintain. In this Ground Prudence will advise us to sow the main of our Charities, and not to throw it away with a careless Hand, upon the barren Rocks and Highways, to be devoured by Vermin and Birds of Prey. •

• We have already observed that Prudence, in the determining the Nature and Quality of our Alms, will direct us to prefer those which may serve a poor Man for a constant Provision, and put him in a fix'd way of living, before those that are transient, and only help in a *Pang* of Need, that just hold him up from perishing for an Hour, but do not take him out of the *Deep Waters*. If the Person to whom we design a Relief, be fit and able to work, 'tis a much wiser Charity to provide him an Employment, or to contribute towards setting him up in his Trade, than barely to relieve his present Necessities; because by this means we relieve him both for the present and for the future, converting our Alms into a standing Maintenance; upon which account, 'tis doubtless a very prudent Charity to contribute to the Erection and Support of publick Work-houses for the Poor, where they and their Children may be provided with such Work as they are capable of, and thereby be inur'd to Industry, and enabled to maintain themselves. Prudent Charity not only prefers such Alms as draw after them a lasting Effect and Benefit, before such as only supply a transient Necessity; it also chooses, if it be consistent with Convenience, to give its Alms in Kind, rather than in Value, to give Clothes to the Naked, and Food to the Hungry, Physick to the Sick, and

and Books to the Uninstructed; for tho' Money indeed will answer all these Needs, yet we are not sure it will be always laid out upon them.

As to the stating the Proportion of our Charity, every Man, as has been observ'd, must be his own Casuist. 'Tis true the *Jews* had a fix'd and stated Proportion, a double Tithing was prescrib'd to them by the Law of *Moses*, an annual Tithe of their Increase for the Maintenance of their Priests and sacred Officers, and a third Year's Tithing, which amounted to the *thirtieth part* of their Increase, and was directed for the Supply and Maintenance of the Poor. If such a Proportion was requir'd of the *Jews*, we may be sure a greater is requir'd of us, whose *Righteousness* must exceed the *Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*, if ever we mean to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Divines have prest this Duty of Charity as practis'd by the *Jews*, in several Discourses, but I think that *Moses's* legal Provision of the *thirtieth part* was of the same kind as our own legal Provision in the Poors-tax, and does not regard that part of Charity which we are treating of, the private Practice of it, what is voluntary and chearful, but what is constrain'd or injoin'd by Law. In the Exercise of this Virtue God has not determin'd the exact Proportions, and it is impossible for us to do it, where there are such different Circumstances and Abilities, in this Matter. We must therefore leave Men, who best understand their own Condition, to the Guidance of their own Conscience and Discretion. They are, in the first place, to consider what is requisite to support them in the Condition of their Birth, their Place, Office, or Family, and to the Discharge of their several Obligations. For Prudence does not require of all, the same Proportions of Charity. Some may afford a *twentieth*, others a *thirtieth*, and to others, whose Children and Dependence are numerous, or whose Fortunes are clogged and entangled, the hundredth part may be over-measure. According as the Heap is, the Wise  
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Man is to sow and distribute; subtracting not only what will support his Life, but also what will maintain the Decency of his Estate and Person, and that not only as to present Needs, but also as to future Necessities, and very probable Contingencies. However, tho' People are not to beggar themselves to enrich others, tho' they are not to give to the Poor abundantly, but sufficiently, according to their Abilities, yet it is doubtless much safer to exceed than to fall short of our due Proportions.

Having fix'd the Proportions of your Estate for your Charity, you ought in the next Place to advise with your Prudence in what Proportions to distribute it. And here Prudence will direct you to differ in your Distributions, according to the different Circumstances of those you design to relieve by them. Prudence directs you to give to such as are of a lower Rank, by little and little, according to their emergent Necessities, to which you are not always to limit your Alms, but sometimes to extend them even to their Refreshment and Recreation; that so together with their Toil and Drudgery, they may now and then enjoy some Sabbath for the Ease of human Nature. But to such whose Fortunes are by Loss and Accident sunk, both Decency and Mercy require us to enlarge the Proportion of our Alms, considering how great a Fall it is from Plenty to Necessity, and consequently how much more is necessary to raise up such dejected Creatures, who are so unacquainted with Misery, into any Degree of Comfort or Self-enjoyment. Prudence will farther direct us to search and find out just Needs, and prevent the Poor from asking, by surprising them with a Kindness which they did not look for. This will strengthen their Faith in the Providence of God, who thus creates them Friends out of the Dust, and brings them Supplies without and beyond their Expectations. Prudence will restrain us from upbraiding those we give to, or from assuming by it a Lordly Superiority over our Fellow-creatures and Fellow-christians; that wou'd be to feed them

them with a Bit and a Knock, and sophisticate our Money with Cruelty. When any wretched Creature wou'd borrow or beg of us, Prudence will advise us not to turn him away with Scorn, nor yet to remove him at a Distance with Signs of Disdain or contemptuous Violence; but if we see Reason to grant him his Request, to do it with ready and open Hand. Thus the Freeness of our Charity enhances the Comfort of it; and what we design'd for a Relief and Succour, will leave no Sting behind it in the Mind of the Receiver. We ought above all things to take especial Care not to oppress the Modesty of the humble, especially of those that have been us'd to give and not to receive; not to relieve them with lofty Looks or angry Words, or a scornful and severe Behaviour; neither shou'd we expose their Poverty by divulging the Charity, or conveying it to them in the open View of the World; but to hand our Relief to them in such a secret and benign, courteous and obliging Manner, as that they may receive it with Chearfulness, and without Blushing and Confusion.

How contrary to this humane and graceful way of giving is the manner of the great Ones of the World in our Time? When they give, 'tis commonly with a Look that either shews the Gift to be extorted by Importunity, or bestow'd as a Dole to Slaves; they seem to affect this shocking sort of Bounty to prevent their being again importun'd, or Peoples thinking they thought it a Duty to be charitable. Not considering that those that want, have really a kind of Property in the small of their Estates, which Charity shou'd lay by for them; that their Distribution is not a work of Supererogation, and which they might have done or not done with the same Innocence. They are always indebted to the necessities of others; these Debts are truly Debts of Honour, and ought to be first discharg'd; they are not left at liberty to give if they please, or to let it alone. We have shewn how they are not only encourag'd in, but commanded to, the performance of this Duty; which indeed is not perform'd  
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when the haughty and rude Air of the Giver takes away from the Receiver the relish of the Comfort he propos'd to himself from the Charity he apply'd to him for. As for those whose constant Necessities have habituated them to ask and receive with more Confidence and Assurance, we shou'd in Prudence convey our Alms to them with such a mixture of Severity and Sweetness, as neither to encourage them to grow upon our Charity, nor drive them into Desperation of it. People wou'd not be so vain in their manner of giving Alms, nor so sparing in the Measure of it, if they wou'd consider that the whole Series of God's Providence is little else but a continu'd Dole of Alms and Charities to his Creatures. It was his Charity that founded this vast and magnificent Hospital of the World, that stock'd it with such a numberless swarm of Creatures, and endow'd it with such plentiful Provisions for the Support and Maintenance of them all. We do all of us live upon his Alms, and depend on his boundless Charity for every breath of Air we draw, for every bit of Bread we eat, and for every Rag of Clothes we wear: Indeed what are all the good things of this World, but so many Arguments of his infinite Liberality? Look every where about Nature, consider the whole Tenor of his Providence, survey all the Works and Actions of his Hands, you shall find them all conspiring in that amiable Character given of him by the Psalmist, *Thou art good, and dost good*. In relieving therefore the Necessities of others we act the Part, and the best Part too, of the Almighty Father of Beings, who sits at the upper End of the Table, and carves to his whole *Creation*. The charitable Man is *a God to the Unfortunate*, imitating the Mercies of God; for Man has in nothing so near a Resemblance of God as in doing good, which is doubtless the most Divine and God-like thing that a Creature is capable of. What then can be more honourable and becoming to him, than to tread in the Footsteps of his Creator, to transcribe his Nature and Actions, and be a kind of Vice-God in the World? Surely did we but understand and  
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consider, how divinely Magnificent it is to supply the Necessities, and contribute to the Happiness of others, we shou'd court it as our highest Preferment, and bless God upon our bended Knees, for deeming us worthy of such an illustrious Employment; and that among the numerous Blessings he has heap'd upon us, he has vouchsafed to admit us to share with himself the Glory of *doing Good*. His only Son, *Jesus Christ*, forsook his Father's Bosom, and came down from Heaven into our Nature to relieve a poor perishing World, and rescue it from eternal Destruction. What a glorious Recommendation is this of Charity? He chose rather to do Good upon Earth than to reign over Angels in Heaven: The sole Business he thought worthy of himself while he was here, was to feed the hungry, to cure the Blind and the Lame, to restore the Sick, to instruct the Ignorant, and reclaim the Rebellious. This was the Drift of all his Actions, this the Subject of his Miracles, this the Scope of all his Doctrines; his whole Life was nothing else but a continu'd Train of Beneficences; he went about *doing Good*. Consider this, ye hard-hearted Christians; you who stop your Ears against the poor Man's Cries! What wou'd your blessed Lord have done, had he been in your Case and Circumstances? Wou'd he, who had so much Compassion on the Multitude, as to work a Miracle to feed them, have turn'd that miserable Wretch away as you do, without the least Dram of Comfort or Relief? Wou'd he, whose Heart and Hand were always open to the Poor and Miserable, have despised the poor Man's Moans, as you do? Peruse the Pattern of his Life; scan over his whole Behaviour, and see if there be any one Action in all this great Exemplar, that does not upbraid you, and cry Shame upon you, for calling yourself, so narrow, cruel, and stingy a Creature, one of his Disciples, who was so merciful, generous, and liberal a Master. If so, learn for the future, either to be so honest as to follow his Exemple, or so modest as to disclaim any Relation to him. Farther, To suppose ourselves Independent

Possessors of our outward Enjoyments and Abilities to do good to others, is in effect to divest God of his Dominion, and strip him into an insignificant Cipher, that only sits above in the Heavens with his Arms folded in his Bosom, and not concerning himself in the Affairs of this lower World ; looking down only from his Throne to please himself by seeing Men scrambling for their several Shares of it. But if we suppose him, as we have infinite Reason to do, the Almighty Author, and Supreme Disposer of all things, we must acknowledge, that 'tis from his overflowing Bounty that we derive whatever we possess ; that 'tis the Gold of his Mines which enriches us, the Crops of his Fields which feed us, the Fleeces of his Beasts which clothe us, and that every good thing we enjoy, is handed to us by the Ministry of his all-disposing Providence ; since we owe all to his Bounty, and in our greatest Flourish are but his *Almsmen* and *Pensioners*, how deeply are we oblig'd to return to him the Oblations of Love and Thanksgiving ? And since Love and Gratitude consist, either in the Affection of the Mind, or in the verbal Signification of it, or in the effectual Performance of good things to the Persons whom we thank and love ; this last is the most complete and substantial Expression of the Reality of our Words and Affections. For tho' Good-will is indeed the Root of Love and Gratitude, yet it lying under Ground, and out of sight, we cannot conclude its Being and Life without visible Fruits of Beneficence to the Person whom we thank and love. As for good Words, they are at best but the Leaves of Gratitude and Love, but 'tis good Works that are the real Fruits of them, by which their Sincerity is demonstrated : For as no Man does ever impress a false Stamp upon the finest Metal, so costly Thanks and Love are seldom counterfeit. 'Tis to avoid giving any thing, or being at any trouble, that Men do so often forge and feign, pretending to make up, in wishing well, the Defect of doing so, and paying down Words instead of Things. But where Works are wanting, there no Expression of our Love  
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and Gratitude can neither be real in itself, or acceptable to God. We may spare our Breath as well as our Money; for the empty Hand gives the Lye to a full Mouth; and all our verbal Praises of God, when we will part with nothing for his sake, are only so many trifling Compliments and downright *Mockeries*: But then do our Gratitude and Love to God discover their Reality, when it appears by our Actions, that we think nothing too dear for him, when for his sake, who hath fed and cloth'd us, and abundantly supplied our Necessities, we are ready upon all Opportunities, to feed, and clothe, and supply the Necessities of others. And can we think any Thing too dear to express our Gratitude to him, upon whose overflowing Bounty we depend for every Blessing we have or hope for; who has provided, not only this temporal World for our Bodies, but also an eternal Heaven for our Souls, and has sent his Son to us from his own Bosom, to tread out our way to it, and conduct us thither? Or can we think any Thanks too costly for that blessed Son, who grudg'd not to come down from Heaven into this Vale of Miseries, and pour out his Blood for our sakes? Was it not much harder for him to part with Heaven, than 'tis for you to part with a little Money? And can you think it much to bestow an Alms for his sake, who grudg'd not to lay down his Life for yours? This is the Argument of the Apostle, *For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho' he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye thro' his Poverty might be rich.* If Men wou'd seriously consider the high Obligation they are charg'd with to give Alms, on the Accounts of God and our Saviour, they would not need so many Motives to it; but really Charity is become so cold and dead, there is hardly any thing but Form remaining in it. We give sometimes because we see others do it, and wou'd not be singular; But alas, we shou'd give, as those who know that God lends the poor Man his *Name*, and allows him to ask our Succours for his sake: He gives him Credit from himself to us for what he stands in need of, and bids him charge what

he receives upon his Account ; permitting us to reckon him oblig'd by it, and to write him down our *Debtor*. When we stop our Ears to the Cries of the Poor, God takes himself to be repulst by us, and interprets it as a rude Affront to his own Person, it being offer'd to one that bears his Name, and wears his Livery : For the poor Man's Rags are a Badge of his Relation to God, and his Wants are the Mouths by which God himself intreats our Relief ; assuring us that he will place it to Account, and take it as kindly at our Hands, as if we had reliev'd him in his own Person, as we have more than once prov'd from his own Word. Shou'd we not break out into these holy Expostulations then, rather than hesitate the least in the Practice of this Duty of Charity ?

*O Blessed God, that thou shouldst own thyself my Debtor, only for repaying thee a part of what thou hast lent me, and of what is still thy own by an unalienable Property : That thou, who art the great Landlord of the World, shouldst thus acknowledge thyself indebted to thy poor Tenant, for paying thee a small Quit-rent, a Pepper-corn of Homage, for what I hold in thy Right, and by thy Bounty !* For thus it is, God lends us our Estates, and then writes himself our Debtor for that small Part which we repay him in the Works of Piety and Charity. And as God puts our Alms to his own Account, so does our Saviour also ; *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me :* That is, I account myself oblig'd by it, and do receive it at your Hands with the same Kindness and Acceptance, as if you had been with me in my State of Humiliation, and shew'd me all this Mercy in my own Person. Now when both my *Creator* and my *Redeemer* send a poor Wretch to me in their own Name and Person, and desire me for their Sakes, and upon their Accounts, to relieve him, can I be either so ungrateful to them, to whom I am indebted for all that I have or hope for, or so wanting to my own Interest, as to neglect so fair an Opportunity of making them some Return of their Favours, and obliging them by it, to heap more Favours upon

upon me? For when in giving to the Poor I give to God and to Christ, what glorious Compensation may I expect from such kind and liberal Paymasters? Tho' God may sometimes defer, yet he never forgets to return a charitable Work: You may safely depend upon it, that so much as ye have bestow'd in Works of Charity, so much, with vast Increase and Interest, you have secur'd to you in the Hands of God, who will either return it to you hither in temporal Blessings; or, which is a thousand times better, repay it to you with infinite Interest, in the Weight of your eternal Crown. Thus by giving Alms we transmit our perishable Wealth to Heaven before us, as it were, by Bills of Exchange, to be repaid us when we come there in *everlasting Treasure*. When by relieving the poor Man's Wants, we may thus transmute our Dross into Gold, and, which is more, our perishing Gold into immortal Glory, what Man in his Wits wou'd refuse any fair Opportunity of making such a blessed Exchange? The Duty of Charity is of so very great Importance to our present and future Felicity, that we have extended our Considerations upon it to a more than ordinary Length. The exciting Christians to the Exercise of it for their own Sakes, and for the Sakes of the Poor and Needy, the Naked and Hungry, has been so much our Endeavour, that we may perhaps be thought too importunate ourselves, and to have enforc'd one thing too much, and too often: but as there can hardly be any thing said too often, which serves to impress this Virtue on the Mind, so there can be too much said of nothing, that tends to make us more Virtuous and more Happy.





# E N V Y.

**O**NE may say more hard things against *Envy*, than against the most tormenting Disease; 'tis full of Pain, and a great Instrument of *Vexation*: It eats the Flesh, dries up the Marrow, makes hollow Eyes, lean Cheeks, and a pale Face; it is no more nor no less than a direct Resolution never to enter into Heaven by the way of noble Pleasure taken in the good of others. It is most contrary to God, and the very Reverse of the Felicities and Actions of Heaven, where every Star increases the Light of the other, and the multitude of Guests at the *Supper of the Lamb*, makes the eternal Meal more a Festival. It is perfectly the State of Hell and the Passion of Devils, for they do nothing but despair in themselves, and envy others Quiet and Safety, and yet cannot rejoice either in their Good or Evil; tho' they endeavour to hinder that, or procure this, with all the Devices and Arts of Malice, and of a great Understanding. Envy can serve no end in the World; it cannot please any thing, nor do any thing, nor hinder any thing, but the Content and Happiness of him that has it: It can never pretend to Justice, as Hatred and Uncharitableness sometimes may: For there may be causes of Hatred, I may have wrong done me, and then Hatred has some Pretence, tho' no just Argument; whereas no Man is unjust or injurious for being prosperous and wise. Many Men therefore profess to hate another, but no Man owns Envy, as being an Enmity and Displeasure for no Cause but Goodness or Felicity.

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Men are like Caterpillars, that delight most to devour ripe and excellent Fruits. Envy is the basest of all Crimes, for Malice and Anger are appeas'd with Benefits, but Envy is exasperated, as envying the Fortunate both the Power and the Will to do good; it never leaves murmuring, 'till the envy'd Person be levell'd, and then only the Vulture leaves to eat the Liver. If his Neighbour be made miserable, the envious Man may be himself troubled, but his Sorrow is selfish; and he does not so much pity the Miserable as himself, for being liable to the same Misfortune. There is something more slavish in this than in any other Passion; it confesses a Superiority in the Object it works upon, either in Merit or in Fortune, and hates it for that Subjection, which perhaps is only a Dream of his, and a Disease of his Imagination. We have been talking of its opposite, Charity; and by examining the Beauty of that Virtue, we shall the better see the deformity of this Vice.

It is an argument of a great and generous Mind, to employ ourselves in *doing good*, to extend our Thoughts and Care to the Concernments of others, and to use our Power and Endeavours for their Benefit and Advantage, because it shews an Inclination and Desire in us, to have others happy as well as ourselves. Those who are of a narrow and envious Spirit, of a mean and sordid Disposition, love to contract themselves within themselves, and like the *Hedgehog*, to shoot out their Quills at every one that comes near them; they take care of no body but themselves, and foolishly think their own Happiness the greater, because they have it alone and to themselves. But the noblest and most heavenly Dispositions think themselves happiest when others share with them in their Happiness. Of all Beings, God is the farthest remov'd from Envy; and the nearer any Creature approaches to him, the farther it is off from this hellish Quality and Disposition. It is the temper of the Devil to grudge Happiness to others; he envy'd that Man should be in Paradise when he was cast out of Heaven.

Other Perfections are of a more melancholick and solitary Disposition, and shine brightest when they are alone, or attain'd to but by a few ; once make them common, and they lose their Lustre. But it is the nature of Goodness to communicate itself, and the farther it spreads, the more glorious it is ; God reckons it as one of the most glorious Titles, as the brightest Gem in his Diadem, *The Lord, mighty to save* ; he delights not to shew his Sovereignty in ruining the Innocent, and destroying helpless Creatures ; that is the property of sovereign Tyranny upon Earth : Cruel and arbitrary Princes think, they never exert their Dignity with so much Lustre, as when it is exercis'd in Acts of Severity and Blood ; as if Mischief was inseparable from Power ; but God delights in relieving the Helpless and Innocent, and to the Devil belongs the Title of *The Destroyer*.

Without the quality of Goodness, all other Perfections wou'd change their Nature, and lose their Excellency ; great Power and Wisdom wou'd be terrible, and raise nothing but Dread and Suspicion in us. Power without Goodness, is Tyranny and Oppression, and Wisdom is Craft and Treachery. 'Tis needless to reduce this to Exemple. A Being endu'd with Knowledge and Power, and yet wanting Goodness, wou'd be nothing less but an irresistible Evil, and an omnipotent Mischief. We admire Knowledge, and are afraid of Power, and suspect Wisdom ; but we can heartily love nothing but Goodness, or such Perfections as are in Conjunction with it ; for Knowledge and Power may be in a Nature contrary to God ; the Devil has these Perfections in an excelling Degree. When all is done, nothing argues a great and generous Mind but only Goodness, which is a Propension and Disposition to make others happy, and a Readiness to do them all the kind Offices we can. A considering Man cannot without Astonishment see, that tho' the Concerns of Men are all dispos'd by an unerring Wisdom, and acknowledged by themselves to be so, yet that scarce any Man is pleas'd. The Truth is,

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we have generally in us the worst part of the Levellers Principles ; and tho' we can very contentedly behold Multitudes below us, yet are we impatient to see any above us ; not only the *Foot complains that it is not the Hand, but the Ear because it is not the Eye.* Not only the lowermost but the higher ranks of Men are uneasy, if there be any one Step above them. Nay, so importunate is this aspiring Humour, that we see Men are forced to feed it, tho' but with Air and Shadows. He that cannot make any real Advance in his Quality, will yet do it in Effigy, in all little Gaieties and Pageantries of it ; and if he cannot effect so much as that, that Canker, Envy, gnaws his Heart, and feeds upon his very Vitals. Many Men have created Wants, merely out of Envy of other Mens Abundance. *Lucifer* was happy enough in his original State, yet cou'd not think himself so, because he was *not like the most High* ; and when by that insolent Ambition he had forfeited Bliss, it has ever since been an aggravation of his Torment, that Mankind is assum'd to a capacity of it ; and accordingly, he makes it the design of his envious Industry to defeat him. How perfectly are the two first parts of this Copy transcrib'd by those, who first cannot be satisfy'd with any inferior degree of Prosperity, and then whet their Impatience with other Mens Enjoyment of what they cannot attain ? 'Tis much to be doubted, that they who go thus far, may compleat the Parallel ; and endeavour, when they have opportunity, to undermine that Happiness they envy. Therefore since the Devil is so apt to impress his whole Image, where he has drawn any of his Lineaments, it concerns us warily to guard ourselves, and by a christian Sympathy with our Brethren, to make the comfort of others an Allay, not an Improvement, of our Miseries ; Charity, the Virtue we have so largely treated of, has a strange magnetick Power, and attracts the concerns of our Brethren to us ; he who has it in his Breast can never want Refreshment, while any about him are happy ; for by adopting their Interests,

He shares in their Joys: *Jethro*, tho' an alien, *rejoiced for all the Good God had done to Israel*; and why shou'd not we have as sensible a Concurrence with our Fellow-Christians? He who has so, will find something to balance his own Sufferings.

One wou'd think that so painful and so impotent a Vice as Envy, shou'd not be so prevalent; but such is the Pride of Man's Heart, that it cannot easily be brought to be in Humour with Subjection of any kind; and we are commonly so favourable to ourselves, as to make up in our own Imagination, the loss of those Advantages we envy in others; which Vanity will go a great way to take off the rancour of this Vice, where Religion and Virtue have not suppress it.



## DETRACTION.

**I** Believe there is hardly a Man living, who is the least conversant with Men or Things past and present, either in Life or in History, but will acknowledge that *Detraction* was never carry'd to such an Extravagance as it has been lately with us in *England*. Some Hints have been given of it in the foregoing Pages. I shall now consider this Vice more fully, and expose the Guilt and the Mischief of it, which will doubtless be confirm'd by all our Experiences.

In doing this it will be necessary to discourse of Detraction in all the Parts of it, as well that of the Tongue as that of the Pen. And if there be those that *stretch their Mouths against Heaven*, we are not to wonder if there be more that *will shoot their Arrows, even bitter*

*bitter Words*, against the best Men upon Earth. It was done in *David's* time; *God and good Men*, as the royal Psalmist assures us, *had the Mouths of wicked Men stretched against them.*

As Detraction is, in some Instances, one of the highest Sins, so 'tis certainly one of the most common, and especially of late. By being so common it becomes insensible, and is a Vice that above all others seems to have maintain'd not only its Empire but its Reputation too. Men are not yet convinc'd heartily that 'tis a Sin; or if any, not of so deep a Dye, or so wide an Extent, as it is. They have, if not false, yet imperfect Notions of it; and by not knowing how far its Circle reaches, do often, like young Conjurers, step beyond the Limits of their Safety. Many who would startle at an Oath, whose Stomachs as well as Consciences would recoil at an Obscenity, do yet slide glibly into a Detraction: which yet, methinks, Persons otherwise of strict Conversation shou'd not frequently and habitually do, had not their easy Thoughts of the Guilt smooth'd the way to it.

Detraction is a flat Contradiction to the grand Rule of Charity, *the loving our Neighbours as ourselves*; that which at once violates the Sum of the whole second Table of the Law, (for so our Saviour renders it) must be look'd on as no trifling inconsiderable Guilt. The very signification of the Word shews 'tis a sort of Robbery committed on your Neighbour; it signifieth the *withdrawing or taking off* from a thing; and as it is apply'd to the Reputation, it denotes the impairing and lessening a Man in point of Fame, rendring him less valu'd and esteem'd by others; which is the final aim of Detraction, tho' pursu'd by various Means. It is justly look'd on as one of the most unkind Designs one Man can have upon another, there being implanted in every Man's Nature a great Tenderness of Reputation; and to be careless of it is taken for a Mark of a degenerate Mind. On which Account it may be presumed, That he who will sell his own Fame, will also sell the publick Interest,

Interest. 'Tis true, many have improv'd this too far, blown up this Spark into such Flames of Ambition as have set the World into a Combustion ; such as *Alexander, Cæsar*, and others, who sacrific'd Hecatombs to their Fame, fed it up to a Prodigy upon a canibal Diet, the Flesh of Men. In our Days we have seen the chief Reason for the most unjust and bloody Wars has been wound up in the single Phrases of our *Honour* and our *Glory* ; yet even these Excesses serve to evince the universal consent of Mankind, that Reputation is a valuable and desirable Thing. Nor have we only the *suffrage of Man*, but the attestation of God himself: *A good Name is better than great Riches* : Again, *A good Name is better than precious Ointment*. And the more to recommend it, he proposes it as a reward to Piety and Virtue, as he menaces the contrary to Wickedness ; *The memory of the Just shall be blessed, but the name of the Wicked shall rot*. Accordingly good Men have in their Estimate rank'd their Names in the next degree to their Souls, preferr'd them before Goods or Life. Indeed 'tis that which gives an inferior sort of Immortality and makes us even in this World survive ourselves ; this part of us alone continues verdant in the Grave, and yields Perfume when we are stench and rottenness : The Consideration whereof has so prevail'd with the more generous Heathens, that they have chearfully quitted Life in Contemplation of it.

The love of Liberty and Glory has been always blest with the applause of Posterity, however it may be deprest in the Pursuits of it. Tyranny and the Creatures of Tyrants despise that good Name, whose Odor is richer than the richest Perfumes ; they being black themselves, desire nothing but to blacken others ; they confound Fame and Infamy, they indulge their lust of Power, and look on every thing else as insipid or ridiculous ; they are insensible of Shame, and do not care what any Tongue can say of them, as long as they can cut it out for it. But as these are Monsters in Morality, so  
nothing

nothing can be argu'd from their Practices against the common opinion of all honest Men. Such will always be impatient when their Reputation is invaded. To what Danger, to what GUILT, does sometimes the very fancy of a reproach hurry Men? It makes them really forfeit that Virtue from whence all true Reputation springs, and lose the Substance by too greedy catching at the Shadow.

Since Reason sets Fame at so high a rate, and Passion at a higher, we may conclude the violating this Interest one of the greatest Injuries in human Commerce; such as is resented not only by the Rash but the Sober. We must pick out only Blocks and Stones, the stupid part of Mankind, if we think we can inflict this Wound without Smart. And tho' the powers of Christianity do in some so moderate this Resentment, that none of those Blows shall recoil, no degree of Revenge be attempted, yet that does not at all justify or excuse the Inflictor. It may indeed be a useful trial of the Patience and Meekness of the Defamed, yet the Defamer has not the less either of Crime or Danger: Not of Crime, for that is rather enhanced by the goodness of the Person injur'd; nor of Danger, since God is the more immediate Avenger of those who attempt not to be their own. But if the Injury meets not with this Meekness, as 'tis very likely it will not in this vindictive Age, it then contracts another accumulative Guilt, stands answerable not only for its own positive Ill, but for all the accidental which it causes to the Sufferer, who by this means is robb'd not only of his Reputation, but his Innocence too, provok'd to those unchristian Returns which draw God also into the Enmity, and set him at once at War with Heaven and Earth. And tho' as to his immediate Judgment he must bear his Iniquity, and answer for his Impatience, yet as in all civil Insurrections the Ringleader is look'd on with a particular Severity, so doubtless in this Case the first Provoker has by his Seniority and Primogeniture a double Portion of the Guilt, and may consequently expect

expect part of the Punishment, according to the doom of our Saviour, *Woe be to that Man by whom the Offence cometh.*

What a train of Mischiefs usually follows this Sin of Detraction! 'tis scarce possible to make a full Estimate of its Malignity: 'Tis one of the grand Incendiaries which disturbs the peace of the world, and has a great Share in most of its Quarrels. For cou'd we examine all the Feuds which harass Persons, Families, nay, sometimes Nations too, we shou'd find the greater part take their Rise from injurious reproachful Words. In regard therefore of the proper Guilt of this Vice, and all those remoter Sins and Miseries which come after it, 'tis every Man's great Concern to watch over himself; neither is it less in respect of that universal Aptness we have to this Sin, and its being so perpetually at hand, that for others we must attend Occasions and Seasons, but the Opportunities of this are always ready: I can do my Neighbour this Injury when I can do him no other. Besides, the multitude of Objects do proportionably multiply both the Possibilities and Occasions, and the Objects here are as numerous as there are Persons in the World I either know or have heard of. For tho' some sorts of Detraction seem confin'd to those to whom we bear particular Malice, yet there are other kinds of it more ranging, which fly indifferently at all. This Sin has the aid of almost universal Example, which is an Advantage beyond all the other, there being scarce any so irresistible Insinuation as the practice of those with whom we converse, and no subject of Converse so common as the defaming our Neighbours. There are two kinds of spreading defamatory Reports, either false or true; which tho' they seem to be of different Complexions, yet may spring from the same Stock, and drive at the same Designs. The spreading of false defamatory Reports admits of various Circumstances: Sometimes a Man invents a perfect Falsity of another; sometimes he that does not invent it, yet reports it, tho' he knows it to be false; and a third sort there

there are, who having not certain Knowledge whether it be false or no, do yet divulge it as an absolute Certainty, or at least with such artificial Insinuations as may bias the Hearer on that Hand: The former of these is a Crime of so high, so disingenuous a Nature, that tho' many are vile enough to commit, none are so impudent to avow it. Even in this Age of insulting Vice, when almost all Wickedness appears barefaced, this is fain to keep on the Vizard. No Man will own himself a false Accuser; for if Modesty do not restrain him, yet his very Malice will, since to confess wou'd be to defeat his Design. 'Tis indeed the most diabolical of all other Sins, it being a Conjunction of two of the Devil's most essential Properties, Malice and Lying: We know 'tis his peculiar Title to be the *Accuser of the Brethren*; and when we transcribe his Copy, we also assume his Nature, intitle ourselves to a Descent from him: *Ye are of your Father the Devil*, we are by it a sort of *Incubus* Brats, the infamous Progenies of the lying Spirit. It is indeed a Sin of so gross, so formidable a Bulk, that there needs no help of Opticks to render it discernible.

The next Degree is not much short of it, what it wants is rather of Invention than Malice; for he that will so adopt another's Lye, shews he wou'd willingly have been its proper Father: It does indeed differ no more than the Maker of adulterate Wares does from the Vender of them; and certainly there cannot be a more ignominious Trade than the being *Hucksters* to such vile Merchandise, in which the publick *Libellers* of our Times are notorious Dealers. They do, 'tis true, invent of their own, as well as report other Mens Scandal; but whether it be their own, or others, they vend it, when they know it to be false, to those whose Interest they think it wou'd be to have it true. The Sin of this is not less than the Baseness. We find the *Lover* of a *Lye* rank'd in an equal form of Guilt with the *Maker*; and surely he must be presum'd to love it that can descend to be the Broker to it, and help it to pass current in the World.

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The third sort of Detractors look a little more demurely; and, with the Woman in the *Proverbs*, *Wipe their Mouths and say, they have done no Wickedness*. They do not certainly know the Falsity of what they report, and their Ignorance must serve them as an Amulet against the Guilt both of Deceit and Malice; but it is to be fear'd 'twill do neither. For if they are affected ignorantly, they are so willing it shou'd be true, that they have not attempted to examine it. It does not suffice that I do not know the Falsity, for to make me a true Speaker 'tis necessary I know the Truth of what I affirm. Nay, if the thing were never so true, yet if I knew it not to be so, its Truth will not secure me from being a Liar; and therefore whoever endeavours to have that received for a Certainty, which himself knows not to be so, offends against Truth. The utmost that can consist with Sincerity, is to represent it to others as doubtful as it appears to him; yet even that, as consonant as it appears to Truth, is not Charity. Even doubtful Accusations leave a Stain behind them, and often prove indelible Injuries to the Party accus'd; how much more then do the more positive and confident Aspersions we have hitherto spoken of? Those who spread this doubtful Calumny are greater Advancers of defamatory Designs than the first Contrivers. For they, upon a consciousness of their Falseness, are oblig'd to proceed cautiously, to pick out the credulous and least discerning Persons, on whom to impose their Fictions, and dare not produce them in all Companies for fear of Detection; but these, in confidence that the Untruth, if it be one, lies not at their Door, speak it without any Restraint in all Places, at all Times; and what the others are fain to whisper, they proclaim, like the Engine which pretends to convey a Whisper many Miles off. In the case of Stealing 'tis proverbially said, *If there were no Receivers, there wou'd be no Thieves*; and in this of Slander, If there were fewer Spreaders, there wou'd be fewer forgers of Libels, the Manufacture wou'd be discharg'd, if it were not for these Retailers of it.

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If we apply these practices to our rule of Duty, there will need no very close Inspection to discern the Obliquity. The most superficial Glance will evidence these several degrees of Slanderers to do what they wou'd not be willing to suffer: Who among them can be content to be falsely aspers'd? Nay, so far are they from that, that let but the shadow of their own Calumny reflect on themselves, let any but truly tell them that they have falsely accus'd others, they grow raving and impatient, like a Dog at a Looking-glass, combating that Image which himself creates; and how smoothly soever the original *Lye* slides from them, the Echo of it grates their Ears. It is observable, that those who make the greatest Havock of other Mens Reputation, are the most nicely tender of their own; which sets this sin of Defamation in a most diametrical Opposition to the evangelical Precept of *loving our Neighbours as ourselves*. Thus much is discernible even in the surface of the Crime; but if we look deeper, and examine the Motives, we shall find the Foundation well agrees to the Superstructure, they being actually one of these two, Malice or Interest. The thing is so disingenuous, so contrary to the dictates of Humanity, as well as Divinity, that I must, in reverence to our common Nature, presume, that nothing but a very forcible Impulse cou'd drive a Man so far from himself. The Devil here plays the Artist, and as the fatalest Poisons to Men are, they say, drawn from human Bodies, so here he extracts the Venom of the irascible and concupiscible part, and in it dips those Arrows which we thus shoot at one another.

*Malice* is the Whirlwind which has shaken States and Families, no less than private Persons; a Passion so impetuous and precipitate, that it often equally involves the Agent and the Patient; a malicious Man being of like Violence, with those who flung the three Children into the fiery Furnace, consum'd by those Flames into which he cast others. As for *Interest*, 'tis the universal Monarch to which all other Empires are Tributaries ;  
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to which Men sacrifice, not only their Conscience and Innocence, but what is usually much dearer, their Sensualities and Vices: Those, whom all the Divine, either Threats or Promises, cannot persuade to mortify, nay but restrain one Lust, at *Mammon's* Beck will disclaim many, and force their Inclinations to comply with their Interest.

While this Sin of Calumny has two such potent Abettors, we are not to wonder at its Growth. As long as Men are malicious and designing, they will be traducing. Those *Cyclopes* will be perpetually forging Thunderbolts, against which no Innocence or Virtue can be proof. And, alas, we daily find too great Effect of their industry: But tho' these are the Forgers of the more solemn deliberate Calumnies, yet this sportive Age has produc'd another sort, there being Men that Defame others out of Wantonness; invent little Stories, that they may find themselves Exercise, and the Town Talk. This, if it must pass for Sport, is such as *Solomon* describes, *As a Mad-man that casteth Firebrands, Arrows and Death, so is he that deceiveth his Neighbour, and saith, am not I in sport?* He who shoots an Arrow in jest, may kill a Man in earnest; and he who gives himself the Liberty to play with his Neighbour's Fame, may soon play it away. Most Men are so ready to entertain ill Opinions of others, that they greedily draw in any Suggestion of that kind; and one may as easily persuade the thirsty Earth to refund Water she has suck'd into her Veins, as them to deposite a Prejudice they have once taken up. These jocular Slanders are often as mischievous as those of deeper Design; and the Slightness of the Temptation aggravates the Guilt: For sure he who can put such an Interest of his Neighbour's, in balance with a little Fit of Laughter, sets it at a lower Price, than he who hopes to enrich or advance himself by it. 'Tho' it may pass among some for a Specimen of Wit, yet it really leaves them among *Solomon's* Fools, *who make a mock at Sin.*

Slander

Slander is a Plant that grows in all Soils. The frolicksome Humour as well as the morose betrays to the Guilt. Who can hope to escape this *Scourge of the Tongue*, as the Wise man has it, and this *Flail of the Press*? Persons of all Ranks do mutually asperse, and are aspers'd. The *Great* give Patronage and Encouragement; and the *Small* madly run into that, which turns so much to their Profit and their Pleasure. He who wou'd not have his Credulity abus'd, has scarce a securer way than, like that Astrologer, who made his *Almanack* give a tolerable Account of the Weather, by a direct Inversion of the common Prognostications, to let his Belief run quite contrary to Reports. This disease is grown so epidemick, that even Religion has got a Taint of it; each Profession and Opinion endeavouring to represent its Antagonist as odious as it can; and while they contend for speculative Truth, they by mutual Calumnies, forfeit the practic: A thing which justly excites the Grief of good Men, to see that those, who pretend all to the same Christianity, shou'd only be unanimous in the violating that Truth and Charity it prescribes.

These Religious Debates, far unworthy such an Epithet, are come to such a degree of Irreligion, that it has given occasion to Unbelievers, to make a jest of our holy Doctrine itself. Can there be any thing, they cry, in a Religion, the Professors of which break thro' all the Rules of it, in Contentions about indifferent Matters? Charity is the Sum of all, and that was never so much broken thro' as it has been in our Times. If these be the Weapons of our spiritual Warfare, what may we think of the carnal? How are our secular Animosities purify'd, when our Speculations are thus manag'd? How easily do we run down the Reputation of any, who stand in the way either of our Spleen or Avarice?

As there can be no true Religion, without Charity; so there can be no true human Prudence, without Bearing and Condescension. This Rule will direct us, who are of the establish'd Church, in our Carriage towards those that  
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dissent from it, both in our Words and in our Actions. A good Christian wou'd have such mistaken Men ready to throw themselves into the Arms of the Church, and wou'd have those Arms as ready to receive them that shall come to us. He wou'd have no supercilious Look to frighten those stray'd Sheep from coming into the Fold again; nor no hard Words to sharpen their Resentment, and make a perpetual Bar to Unity. But where is there a Disposition in the contending Parties, to bear with one another, to speak well of one another, and put an end to that Fire of Contention, which the Mouths of wicked Men have blown into so terrible a Flame?

Not only pious Men, but Piety itself partakes of the same Fate in the Insults of Slander; and he who has a merry Humour to gratify, cares not whether it be at the Expence of his Religion, Neighbour's Reputation, or at that of Religion itself.

How great Madness is it to make so costly Oblation to so vile an Idol as Calumny? 'Tis indeed the worshipping our own Imaginations; preferring a malicious Fiction before a real Felicity; which is but faintly resembled by him, who is said to have chosen to part with his Bishoprick, rather than burn his Romance. Are there not gross corporal Sins enough to ruin us? Must we have real ones too? Damn ourselves with Chimeras, and by these Forgeries of our Brains, dream ourselves to Destruction?

Let all those then, who thus unhappily employ their invective Faculty, timely consider, how unthriving a Trade it is likely to prove; that all their false Accusations of others, will rebound in true ones upon themselves. It does often so in the World, where the most clandestine Contrivances of this kind many times meet with Detection: Or if this should happen to keep on the Disguise here, yet it will infallibly be torn off at the great Day, when all the Deeds of Darkness shall be set in full Light before God, Angels and Men.

Let us now take the other Branch of Defamation, that which is true, into our Consideration. This must be confessed

felt to be a lower Form of Guilt than the former ; yet, as to the kind, they equally agree in the Definition of *Detraction* ; since a Man's Credit may be impair'd, as well by true Reports as by false ones. Tho' every Fault have some penal Effects which are coetaneous to the Act, yet this of Infamy is not so ; this is a more remote Consequent, that which it immediately depends upon, is the publishing. A Man may do things, which to God and his own Conscience are abominable, and yet keep his Reputation with Men ; but when this stifled Crime breaks out, when his secret Guilts are detected, then, and not till then, he becomes infamous. Thus, tho' his Sin be the material, yet 'tis the Discovery that is the formal Cause of his Infamy. It follows therefore, that he who divulges an unknown conceal'd Fault, stands accountable for all the Consequences which flow from that divulging ; but whether accountable as for Guilt, must be determined by the particular Circumstances of the Cause. We are here to admit of an Exception ; for tho' every Discovery of another's Fault, be, in the strict natural Sense of the Word, a *Detraction*, yet it will not always be the Sin of *Detraction* ; because in some Instances, there may some higher Obligations intervene, and supersede what we owe to the Fame of our Neighbour. In those Cases it may not only be lawful, but necessary to expose him. It may often fall out, that by concealing one Man's Fault, I may be injurious to another, nay, to a whole Community, and then I assume the Guilt I conceal ; and, by the Laws both of God and Man, am judg'd an Accessary. And as Justice to others enforces, so sometimes Justice to a Man's self, allows the publishing of a Fault, when a considerable Interest, either of Fame or Fortune, cannot otherwise be rescu'd. But to make loud Outcries of Injuries, when they tend nothing to the Redress of it, is a Liberty rather assum'd by Rage and Impatience, than authorized by Justice ; nay often in that case, the Complainer is the most injurious Person. For he inflicts more than he suffers, and in lieu of some trivial Right

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of his, which is invaded, he assaults the other in a nearer Interest, by wounding him in his good Name. But if the Cause be considerable, and the Manner regular, there lies no sure Obligation upon any Man to wrong himself in Indulgence to another. Neither does Charity retrench this Liberty; for tho' it be one Act of Charity to conceal another Man's Fault, yet many times it may be inconsistent with some more important Charity, which I owe to a third Person, or perhaps to a Multitude, as in those Cases wherein publick Benefit is concern'd. If this were not allowable, no History could lawfully be written; since, if true, it cannot but relate the Faults of many; no Evidence could be brought in against a Malefactor; and indeed, all Discipline would be inverted, which would be so great a Mischief, that Charity obliges to prevent it, whatever Defamation falls upon the Guilty by it: For in such Instances, 'tis a true Rule, that Mercy to the Evil, proves Cruelty to the Innocent: And as in a Competition of Mischiefs, we are to choose the least; so of two Goods the greatest and the most extensive is the most eligible. That Charity, which reflects even upon myself, may also sometimes supersede that to my Neighbour; the Rule not obliging me to love him better than myself. I need not surely silently assent to my own unjust Defamation, for fear of proving another a false Accuser; nor suffer myself to be made a Beggar, to conceal another Man's being a Thief. 'Tis true, in a great Inequality of Interests, *Charity*, whose Character is *not to seek her own*, will prompt me to prefer a greater Concern of my Neighbour's before a slight one of my own; but in equal Circumstances I am sure I am at liberty to be kind first to myself: If I will recede even from that, I may, but that is then to be accounted among the heroick Flights of Charity, not her binding and indispensable Laws.

When 'tis remember'd how common the Breaches of Justice and Charity are now grown in the World, we must certainly impute such incessant Effects to some vigorous Causes, of which it may not be amiss to point out  
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some of the most obvious. One of the principal Ingredients in Defamation is *Pride*; a Humour, which as it is always mounting, so it will make use of any Footstool towards its Rise. A Man who affects an extraordinary Splendor of Reputation, is glad to find any Foils to set him off; and therefore will let no Fault or Folly of another enjoy the Shade, but bring it into the open Light; that by the Comparison, his own Excellencies may appear the brighter. I dare appeal to the Breast of any proud Man, Whether he does not upon such Occasions, make some Pharisaical Reflexions upon himself; whether he be not apt to say, *I am not like other Men, or as this Publican*, tho' probably he leaves out the, *God, I thank thee*. He who cherishes such Sentiments as these in himself, will doubtless be willing to propagate them to other Men; and to that end render the Blemishes of others as visible as he can. But this betrays a degenerate Spirit, which, from a Consciousness that he wants solid Worth, on which to build a Reputation, is fain to found it upon the Ruin of other Mens. The true Diamond sparkles even in the Sun-shine; but that Virtue is a sort of Glow-worm brightness, which owes its Lustre to the Darkness about it.

*Envy* is another Promoter to Detraction, sometimes it is particular, sometimes general. He who has a Pique to another, would have him as hateful to all Mankind as he is to him; and therefore as he repines at any thing which makes him more esteem'd, so he exults in any thing which depresses him, and is usually very industrious to improve the Opportunity. He has a strange Sagacity in hunting it out. No Vulture does more quickly scent a Carcase than an envious Person does these *dead Flies*, which corrupt his Neighbour's *Ointment*, whose Vapour, like a strong Wind, is by his Heat scatter'd, and dispers'd far and near. Nor needs he any great Crime to practise on: Every little Infirmary or Passion look'd on thro' his Opticks, appears a mountainous Guilt. He can improve the least Speck or Freckle into a Leprosy, which shall over-  
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spread the whole Man; and a Cloud no bigger than a *Man's Hand* may, like that of *Elijah's*, in an Instant with the help of Prejudice, grow to the utter darkening of his Reputation, and fill the whole Horizon with Tempest and Horror. Sometimes the Envy is general, not confin'd to any Man's Person, but diffus'd to the whole Nature. There are some Tempers so malign that they wish ill to all, and believe ill of all; like *Timon of Athens*, who profess'd himself an universal *Man-bater*. He whose guilty Conscience reflects dismal Images of himself, is willing to put the same ugly Shape upon the whole Nature; and to conclude that all Men are the same, were they but closely inspected: Wherefore, when he can see but the least Glimmering of a Fault in any, he takes it as a Proof of his Supposition, and with an envious Joy calls in as many Spectators as he can. 'Tis certain there are some in whose Ears nothing sounds so harsh as the Commendation of another; and nothing, on the contrary, is so melodious as a Defamation. *Plutarch* gives an Instance of this upon *Aristides's* Banishment; whom, when a mean Person had propos'd to *Ostracism*, being ask'd what Displeasure *Aristides* had done him? He reply'd, *None; neither do I know him, but it grieves me to hear every body call him a just Man*. I fear some of our keenest Accusers now-a-days may give the same Answer. Any Man that is eminent for Piety, or indeed moral Virtue, shall have many invidious Eyes upon him, *watching for his halting*; and if any the least Obliquity can be spied, he is us'd worse than the vilest Malefactor: For such are try'd but at one Bar, and know the utmost of their Doom; but these are arraign'd at every Table in every Tavern. At such Variety of Judicatories there will be Variety of Sentences, only they commonly concur in this one, that he is an Hypocrite; and then what Complacency, what Triumph have they in such a Discovery? There is not half so much Epicurism in one of their study'd Luxuries; no Spectacle affords them so much Pleasure as a bleeding Fame, thus lying at their Mercy.

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There is another sort of Detractors, whose Designs are not so black, but are mean and sordid, much too light to be put in Balance with a Neighbour's Credit. Of these, some will pick up all the little Stories they can get to humour a Patron; an Artifice well known by these Trencher-Guests, who, like Rats, still haunt the best Provisions. These Men do almost come up to a literal Sense of what the *Psalmist* spoke in a figurative, *They eat up People for Bread*, tear and worry a Man in his good Name, that themselves may eat. It was a Curse denounc'd against *Eli's* Offspring, *That they should come and crouch for a Morsel of Bread*. But such Men court this as a Preferment; and to bring themselves within the reach of it, stick not to assume that vile Office of common Delators. There are others, who, when they have got the Knowledge of another Man's Faults, think it an endearing thing to whisper them in the Ear of some Friend or Confident. But surely if they must needs sacrifice some Secret to their Friendship, they shou'd take *David's* Rule, and *not offer that which cost them nothing*. If they will express their Confidence, let them acquaint them with their own private Crimes; that indeed will shew something of Trust; but those Experiments upon another Man's Cost, will hardly convince any considerable Person of their Kindness.

A more trifling sort of Defamers than even these, are those who have no deliberate Design which they pursue in it, yet are as assiduous at the Trade as the deeper Contrivers. Such are those who publish their Neighbour's Failings as they read *Gazettes*, only that they may be telling News; an Itch which some People's Tongues are strangely over-run with, who can as well hold a glowing Coal in their Mouths, as keep any thing they think new. They will sometimes run themselves out of Breath, for fear any shou'd serve them as *Abimaaz* does *Cushi*, and tell the Tale before them. This is one of the most childish Vanities imaginable; and sure Men must have Souls of a very low Level that can think it a commen-

surate Entertainment. Others there are, who use defamatory Discourse neither for the Love of News nor Defamation, but purely for love of Talk, whose Speech, like a flowing Current, bears down indiscriminately whatever lies before it. Indeed such incessant Talkers are usually People not of depth enough to supply themselves out of their own Store, and therefore can let no foreign Accession pass by them, no more than a Mill which is always going can afford any Waters to run waste. I know we use to call this Talkativeness a feminine Vice; but to speak impartially, I think, tho' we have given that Sex the Inclosure of the Scandal, they have not all the Fault; and he that shall appropriate Loquacity to Women, seems to overlook the Failings of his own Sex; for 'tis possible to go into masculine Company, where 'twill be as hard to edge in a Word as at a Female Gossiping. However, as to this Particular of defaming, both the Sexes seem to be at a Vye, and I think he were a very critical Judge that could determine between them.

But lest the latter of these Defamers should be apt to absolve themselves, as Men of harmless Intentions, I shall desire them to consider, that they are only more impertinent, not less injurious. For tho' it be granted, that the proud and envious are to make a distinct Account for their Pride and Envy, yet as far as relates to their Neighbour, they are equally mischievous. *Anticreon*, that was chok'd with a Grape-stone, dy'd, as surely as *Julius Cæsar* with his three and twenty Wounds; and a Man's Reputation may be as well fool'd and prattled away, as maliciously betray'd, perhaps more easily; for where the Speaker can least be suspected of Design, the Hearer is apter to give him Credit: This way of insinuating by familiar Discourse, being like those Poisons that are taken in at the Pores, which are the more insensibly suck'd in, and the most impossible to expel. He who in publishing his Neighbour's Faults acts not upon the Dictates of Justice or Charity, acts directly in

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Contradiction to them; for where they do not upon some particular Respects command, they do implicitly and generally forbid all such Discoveries. If the Fault divulg'd be of a light Nature, the Offender cannot merit so much by it, as to be made a publick Discourse. Fame is a tender thing, and is seldom tost and bandy'd without receiving some Bruise, if not a Crack. Reports, like Snow-balls, gather still the farther they roll; and when I have once handed it to another, what Assurance have I that he will not improve it? And if he deliver it so advanc'd to a third, he may also give his Contribution to it; and so, in a successive transmitting, it may grow to such a monstrous Bulk, as bears no Proportion to its Original. He must be a great Stranger to the World, that has not experimentally found the Truth of this. How many Persons have lain under great and heavy Scandals, which have taken their first Rise only from Inadvertence or Indiscretion? Of so quick a Growth is Slander, that the least Grain, like that of Mustard-seed, immediately shoots up into a Tree; and when it is so, it can no more be reduced back into its first Cause, than a Tree can shrink into that little Seed from whence it sprang. No Ruins are so irreparable as those of Reputation, and therefore he who puts out but one Stone, towards the Breach, may do a greater Mischief than perhaps he intends, and a greater Injustice too; for by how much the more strictly Justice obliges us to Reparation, in case of Injuries done, so much the more severely does it prohibit the doing such Injuries as are irreparable. No considering Man can be ignorant how apt even little trivial Accusations are to tear and mangle one's Fame, and if yet the lavish Talker restrains them not, he certainly stands accountable to God, his Neighbour, and his own Conscience, for all the Danger they procure.

If the Report concerns some higher and enormous Crime, 'tis true the Delinquent may deserve the less Pity, yet perhaps the Reporter may not deserve the less Blame.

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for often such a Discovery serves but to enrage, not reclaim the Offender, and precipitate him into farther Degrees of Ill. Modesty and Fear of Shame is one of those natural Restraints, which the Wisdom of God has put upon Mankind, and he that once stumbles, may yet, by the Check of that Bridle, recover again; but when by a publick Detection he is fallen under that Infamy he fear'd, he will then be apt to discard all Caution, and think he owes himself the utmost Pleasures of his Vice, as the Price of his Reputation. Perhaps he advances still farther, and sets up for a reverse sort of Fame by being eminently wicked, and he who before was but a clandestine Disciple, becomes a Doctor of Impiety. And sure it were better to let a conceal'd Crime remain in its wish'd Obscurity, than by this rousing it from its Covert bring it to stand at Bay, and set itself in this open Defiance, especially in this degenerate Age, when Vice has so many Well wishers; that, like a hoping Party, they eagerly run into any that will head them.

The divulging of private Crimes, especially if they be novel and unusual, does but an ill piece of Service to the Publick. Vice is contagious, and casts pestilential Vapours, and as he that shou'd bring out a Person sick of the Plague, to inform the World of his Disease, would be thought not to have much befriended his Neighbourhood; so he that displays these vicious Ulcers, while he seeks to defame one, may perhaps infect many. We too experimentally find the Force of bad Examples. Men frequently take up Sins, to which they have no natural Propension, merely by way of Conformity and Imitation; but if the Instance happens in a Crime which more suits the Practice of the Hearers, tho' it cannot be said to seduce, yet it may encourage and confirm them, embolden them not only the more frequently to act, but even to avow those Sins in which they find they stand not single; and by discovering a new Accessary to their Party, invite them the more heartily and openly to espouse it. These are such Effects as surely do very ill

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correspond with the Justice and Charity we owe either to particular Persons, or to Mankind in general. And indeed no better can be expected from a Practice, which so perfectly contradicts the grand Rule both of Justice and Charity, *The doing as we wou'd be done by*: That this does so, every Man has already Conviction with him, if he pleases but to consult his own Heart. With what Solicitude do we seek to hide our own Guilt? What false Dresses have we for it? What Varnishes? There are not more Arts of disguising our corporeal Blemishes, than our moral, and yet while we thus paint our own Deformities, we cannot allow any the least Imperfection of another's to remain undetected, but tear off the Veil from their blushing Frailties, and not only expose but proclaim them. Can there be a grosser or more detestable Partiality than this? God may sure in this Instance, as in many others, expostulate with us as he did with *Israel*, *Are not your ways unequal?* What Barbarity, what Inhumanity is it, thus to treat those of the same common Nature with ourselves, whom we cannot but know have the same Concern to preserve a Reputation, and the same Regret to lose it which we have? What a Shame is it, that the Evangelical Precept of *doing as we would be done to*, which met with so much Reverence from Heathens, that *Severus* the Emperor preferred it to all the Maxims of Philosophers, should be thus contemn'd and violated by Christians, and that too upon such slight inconsiderable Motives as usually prevail in this Case of Defamation?

We are not to consider this Fault in its Root only, as it is a Defect of Justice and Charity, but in its product too, as it is a Seminary of more Injustice and Uncharitableness. The disadvantageous Reports we make of our Neighbours are almost seen to come round; for let no Man persuade himself that the Hearers will keep his Counsel any better than he does that of the defam'd Person: The softest Whisper of this kind will find others to echo it, 'till it reach the Ears of the concern'd Party, and perhaps too with some aggravating Circumstances.

When 'tis consider'd how unwilling Men are to hear of their Faults, tho' even in the mildest and most charitable way of Admonition, it is not to be doubted a publick Defamation will seem disobliging enough to provoke a Return which again begets a Rejoinder, and so the Quarrel is carry'd on with mutual Recriminations. All malicious Enquiries are made into one another's Manners, and those things which perhaps they did in Closets, come to be proclaim'd upon the House-top. Thus the Wild fire runs round, 'till sometimes nothing but Blood will quench it; or if it arrives not to that, it usually fixes us in an irreconcilable Feud. To this are often owing those Distances we see among Friends and Relations, such Strangeness, such Animosity among Neighbours, that you cannot go to one but you shall be entertained with Invectives against the other: Perhaps too you shall lose both, because you are willing to side with neither. What Account can any Man give to himself, either in Christianity or Prudence, that has let in such a train of Mischiefs, merely to gratify an impotent childish Humour of telling a Tale? Peace was the great Legacy Christ left to his Followers, and ought to be guarded, tho' we expose for it our greatest temporal Concerns, but cannot without despite to him, as well as our Brethren, be thus prostituted.

If we consider Detraction abstractedly from those more solemn Mischiefs which attend it, the mere Levity and Unworthiness of it sets it below an ingenuous Person. We generally think a Tatler and Busy-body a Title of no small Reproach, and to whom does it more justly belong than to those, who busy themselves first in learning, then in publishing the Faults of others? An Employment which the Apostle thought a Blot, even upon the weaker Sex, and the prevention to be of such Importance, that he prescrib'd them to change their whole Condition of Life, to convert *Widowhood*, tho' a State which in other respects he much prefers, into *Marriage* rather than expose themselves to this Temptation. If  
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their Impotence cannot afford Excuse for it, what a Debasement is it of Mens nobler Faculties, to be thus entertain'd? The Historian gives it as an ill Indication of *Domitian's* Temper, that he employ'd himself in catching and tormenting Flies; and sure they fall not under a much better Character, either for Wisdom, or Goodnature, who thus snatch up all the little fluttering Reports they can meet with, to the prejudice of their Neighbours.

Besides this divulging the Faults of others, there is another Branch of Detraction naturally springing from this Root, and that is censuring, and severe judging of them. We think we have not well play'd the Historians when we have told a thing, unless we add also our Remarks and Animadversions upon it. Tho' God knows, it is bad enough to make a naked Relation, and trust it to the severity of the Hearers: Yet few can content themselves with that, but must give them a Sample of Rigour, and by the bitterness of their own Censure, invite them to pass the like; a Process contrary to all rules of Law or Equity, for the Plaintiff to assume the part of a Judge. And we may easily divine the fate of that Man's Fame who is so unduly try'd. Indeed it is sad to see how many private Tribunals are every where set up, where we scan and judge our Neighbour's Actions, but scarce ever acquit any; we take up with the most incompetent Witnesses; nay, frequently suborn our own Surmises and Jealousies, that we may be sure to cast the unhappy Criminal. How nicely and scrupulously do we examine every Circumstance, (would to God we were but half so exact in our own penitential Inquisitions) and torture it, to make it confess something which appears not in the the more general view of the Fact, and which perhaps never was in the Actor's Intentions? In a word, we do, like Witches in their magical Chymistry, extract all the Venom, and take none of the Allay. By this means we confound the degrees of Sins, and sentence deliberate and indeliberate, a Habit or an Act, all at one rate, that

is commonly, at the utmost it can amount to, even in its worst Acceptation. And surely this were a most culpable Corruption in judgment, cou'd we shew our Commission to judge our Brethren: But we may here, every one of us, ask ourselves in our Saviour's Words, *Who made me a Judge?* If he disclaim'd it, who in respect of his Divinity had the supreme Right, and that too in a Case, wherein one at least of the Litigants had desir'd his Interposition, what a Boldness is it in us to assume it, where no such Appeal is made to us; but on the contrary, the Party disowns our Authority? which is superseded by our great Lawgiver in that express prohibition, *Judge not*, back'd with a severe Penalty, *that ye be not judged*. As God has appropriated Vengeance to himself, so has he Judicature also, and 'tis an Invasion of his Peculiar, for any, but his Delegates, the lawful Magistrates, to pretend to either. Indeed in all private Judgments, so much depends upon the Intention of the Offenders, that unless we could possess ourselves of God's Omniscience, 'twill be as irrational as impious to assume this Authority: 'Till we know Mens Hearts, we are at best but imperfect Judges of their Actions. At our rate of judging, St. Paul had surely past for a most malicious Persecutor, whereas God saw he *did it ignorantly in Unbelief*, and had *Mercy on him*. The same Apostle gives this good Counsel, *Judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come*. For tho' 'tis said, the *Saints shall judge the World*, yet it must be at the great Assize, and he that will needs intrude himself into the Office before the time, will be in danger to be rather passive than active in that great and solemn Judicatory. By these Reflexions we do not intend to advance such a stupid Charity, as shall make no distinction of Actions; there is a Woe pronounced, as well to those who *call Evil Good*, as *Good Evil*: When we see an open notorious Sin committed, we may express a detestation of the Crime, tho' not of the Actor. This may sometimes be a necessary Charity, both to the Offender, and to the innocent Spectators,

Spectators, as an Amulet to keep them from the Contagion of the Exemple. But still, even in these Cases, our Sentence must not exceed the Evidence, we must judge only according to the visible undoubted Circumstances, and not aggravate the Crime upon Conjectures and Presumptions: If we do, how right soever our Guesses may be, our Judgment is not, but we are, as St. James speaks, *Judges of evil Thoughts*. This rash Judging is not only very unjust both to God and Man, but it is an act of the greatest Pride. When we set ourselves in the Tribunal, we always look down with Contempt on those at the Bar; and certainly there is nothing does so gratify a haughty Humour, as this piece of usurp'd Sovereignty over our Brethren; but the more it does so, the greater Necessity there is to abstain from it. Pride is a hardy kind of Vice, that will live upon the barest Pasture; how little Need is there then of pampering it? Which we cannot more effectually do, than by this censorious Humour, by which we are so perpetually employ'd abroad, that we have no leisure to look homeward, and see our own Defects. We are, like the Inhabitants of *Ai*, so eager upon our Pursuit of others, that we leave ourselves expos'd to the Ambushes of *Satan*, who will be sure still to encourage us in our Chase, draw us still farther and farther from ourselves, and cares not how zealous we are in fighting against the Crimes of others, so he can but keep that Zeal from recoiling upon our own.

It is plain to every one at the very first Reflexion, that the vice of Detraction must needs be quite opposite to the virtue of Charity, which *thinks no Evil*, is not apt to make severe Constructions, but sets every thing in the fairest Light, putting the most candid Interpretations upon them that they will bear, which is of great importance to the Reputation of our Neighbours. The World, we know, is in many Instances extremely govern'd by Opinion; but in this 'tis all in all; it has not only an Influence upon it, but is that very thing; Reputation

being nothing but a fair Opinion and Estimation among others. Now this Opinion is not always sway'd by due Motives ; sometimes little Accidents, sometimes Fancy, and very often Prepossession governs it. Thus he who puts the first ill Character, fixes the Stamp, which afterwards goes current in the World. The generality of People take up Prejudice, as they do Religions, upon trust ; and of those that are more curious in enquiring into the Grounds, there are not many who vary on the more charitable Hand. Men are apt to think it some Disparagement to their Invention, if they cannot say something as sharp upon the Subject as has been said before : So 'tis the business of many to lay on more Load, but of few to take it off.

As this is very uncharitable, in respect of the Injury offer'd, so also is it in regard of the grand Rule of Charity. Can we pretend to love our Neighbour as ourselves, and yet shall our Love to him have the quite contrary Effects to that we bear ourselves ? True Charity is more sincere : It does not turn to us the reverse End of the Perspective, to represent our own Faults at a distance, and in the most diminutive Size, while it shuffles the other to us, when we are to view his. To buy by one Measure and sell by another, is not more unequal, than it is to have these differing Standards for our own and our Neighbour's Faults, that our own shall weigh *lighter than Vanity*, yea nothing, and yet his shall prove *Zachary's Talent of Lead*.

This is such a Partiality, as consists not with common Honesty, and can therefore never be reconcil'd with christian Charity ; and how demurely soever such Men may pretend to Sanctity, that Interrogation of God presses hard upon them, *Shall I account them pure with the wicked Balances, and with the bag of deceitful Weights ?* Such bitter Invectives against other Mens Faults, and Indulgence or Pailiation of their own, shews their Zeal lies in their Sp'een, and that they consider not so much what is done, as who does it ; and to such, the Sentence  
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of St. Paul is very applicable, *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O Man! whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest dost the same thing.* But suppose a Man has not the very same Sins he censures in another, yet 'tis sure every Man has some, and of what sort soever they be, he desires not they shou'd be rigorously scan'd, and therefore by the rule of Charity and Justice too, ought not to do that which he wou'd not suffer. If he can find Extenuations for his own Crimes, he is, in all Reason, to presume others may have some for theirs: The common frailty of our Nature, as it is apt alike to betray us to Faults, so it gives as equal Share in the Excuse; and therefore what I wou'd have pass for the effect of Impotence or Inadvertence in myself, I can, with no tolerable Ingenuity, give a worse Name to in him.

It has been receiv'd among the Maxims of civil Life, not unnecessarily to exasperate any Body; to which agrees that Advice, *Speak not evil of thy Neighbour; if thou dost, thou shalt hear that which will not fail to trouble thee.* There is no Person so inconsiderable, but may at some time or other do a Displeasure. In Defamation there needs no Preparation; Every Man has his Weapon ready for a return, and none can shoot these Arrows, but they must expect they will revert with an unbounded Force, not only to the violation of christian Unity, but to the Aggressor's great secular Detriment, both in Fame, and frequently in Interest. Revenge is sharp-sighted, and overlooks no Opportunity of a Retaliation. Who then can sufficiently wonder, that a Practice, which so thwarts our Interest of both Worlds, shou'd come universally to prevail among us? Yet that it does so, I appeal to the Consciences of most, and to the observation of all. What so common topick of Discourse is there, as this of backbiting our Neighbours? Come into company of all Ages, all Ranks, all Professions, this is the constant Entertainment: And I doubt, he that at Night shall duly recollect the Occurrences of the Day, shall

shall very rarely be able to say, he has spent it without hearing, or speaking something of this kind. Those who restrain themselves from other Liberties, often indulge themselves in this. What, besides an unhappy Servility to Custom, can possibly reconcile Men, who own Christianity, to a Practice so widely distant from it? 'Tis true, those that profess themselves Men of this World, who design only their Portion in this Life, may take it up as something conducive, at least seemingly, to their End: But for those who propose higher Hopes to themselves, and know that Charity is one of the main Props to those Hopes, how foolishly do they undermine themselves, when they thus act against their Principles, and that upon no other Authority than that of popular Usage? I know Men are apt to excuse themselves upon their Indignation against Vice, and think that their Zeal must as well acquit them for the Violation of the second Table, as it once did *Moses* for the breaking both. But to such I may answer in Christ's Words, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of*. After all this pretext of Zeal, I fear it is but a Cheat we put on ourselves. Let Men truly search their own Breasts, and I doubt the best will find there is something of Vanity which lies at the bottom, and that Detraction, which is really but the defect of Wit, is many times made use of to shew it. He whose Wit is so precarious, that it must depend only on the Folly or Vice of another, had best give over all pretence to it. He who has nothing of his own Growth to set before his Guests, had better make no Invitations, than break down his Neighbour's Inclosure, and feast them upon his Plunder. What am I the worse, if a vain talkative Person thinks me reserv'd; or if he, whose wanton Levity is his Disease, calls me dull, because I vapour not out all my Spirits in Froth? *Socrates*, when inform'd of some derogating Speeches one had us'd of him behind his back, made only this facetious Reply, *Let him beat me too when I am absent*. He who gets not such an Indifference to all the idle Censures of Men, will be disturb'd in all his

his Transactions; it being scarce possible to do any thing but there will be Descants made on it: And if a Man will regard those Winds, he must, as *Solomon* says, *never sow*; he must suspend even the necessary Actions of common Life, if he will not venture them to the being mis-judged by others. He that upon such a despicable Motive will violate his Duty in one particular, lets the Devil gain a main Point of him, and can with no good Reason deny to do it in others. To speak the Truth, there is not a more fertile womb of Sin than the dread of ill Mens Reproach. Other Corruptions must be gratify'd with Cost and Industry, but the Devil in this has no farther trouble, than to laugh Men out of their Souls. So prolifick a Vice, therefore, had need be weeded out of Mens Hearts, for if it be allow'd the least Corner, if it be indulg'd in this one Instance, 'twill quickly spread itself farther. And after all, this fear of Reproach is a meer Fallacy, started to disguise a more real cause of Fear; for the greater danger of Reproach does indeed lie on that other side. Common Estimation puts an ill Character upon pragmatistical meddling People; for tho' the Inquisitiveness and Curiosity of the Hearer may sometimes render such Discourse grateful enough to him, yet it leaves in him no good Impression of the Speaker. *Whether it be Friend or Foe, talk not of other Mens Lives,* says the Son of *Sirach*, *and if thou canst without Offence, reveal them not; for he heard and observ'd thee, and when time cometh he will hate thee.* In a word, all considering Persons will be ever upon the Guard in such Company, as foreseeing they will talk no less freely of them than they do of others before them. Nor can the commonness of the Guilt obviate the Censure, there being nothing more frequent than for Men to accuse their own Faults in other Persons. In this particular, none has so much reason to fear a Defamer, as those who are themselves such; for besides the common prudential Motive, their own Consciousness gives them an inward Alarm, and makes them look for a Retribution in the same kind.

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kind. Thus, upon the whole Matter, we see there is no real Temptation, even to our Vanity, to comply with this uncharitable Custom, we being sure to lose more Repute by it, than we can propose to ourselves to gain. The being esteem'd an ill Man, will not be balanc'd by being thought pleasant ingenious Company, were one sure of being so. But 'tis odds that will not be acquir'd by it neither, for the most assiduous Tale-bearers, and bitterest Revilers, are generally half-witted People: There being nothing more frequently observable, than such Mens Aptness to *Speak evil of Things they understand not.*

Defamation is most scandalous, when it proceeds from Men otherwise virtuous. Let not those that have repudiated the more inviting Sins, shew themselves philter'd and bewitch'd by this; but, instead of submitting to the ill Example of others, set a good one to them, and endeavour to bring this unchristian Custom out of Fashion. If they do not, I am sure they will be more deeply chargeable than others; for the more Command they have over their other Corruptions, the more do they witness against themselves. Their Remissness and willing Subjection to this, besides their Exemple when ill, is more ensnaring than other Mens, and is apt to insinuate easy Thoughts of the Sin. Men think themselves safe while they follow one of noted Piety, and the authority of the Person often leads them blindfold into his Failings. I question not in this Particular many are encourag'd by the Liberty they see even good Men take. Such therefore have a more accumulative Guilt, for they do not only commit, but patronize the Fault.

In curing ourselves of this spiritual Disease, we must follow the rule of Physick to examine the Causes, that the Remedies may be adapted to them. Let every Man study his own constitution of Mind, and observe what are his particular Temptations to this sin of Detraction; whether any of those I have before mention'd, as Pride, Envy, Levity, &c. or any other which lies deeper, and

is only discernible to his own Inspection: Let him make this Scrutiny, and then accordingly apply himself to correct the Sin in its first Principle. For as when there is an eruption of Humour in any Part, 'tis not cur'd meerly by outward Application, but by such alterative Medicines as purify the Blood: So this Leprosy of the Tongue will still spread farther, if it be not check'd in its Spring and Source, by the mortifying of those corrupt Inclinations which feed and heighten it.

As the Rabbies were wont to say, that in every signal Judgment which befel the *Jews*, there was some grain of the golden Calf, so I think I may venture to say, that in all Detraction there is some mixture of Pride. But how can we insult over others, when we are not only under a Possibility, but are actually involv'd in the same Guilt? And then, what are all our Accusations and bitter Censures of others, but Indictments and condemnatory Sentences against ourselves? Tho' our officious Vehemence against another's Crime may blind the eyes of Men, yet God is not so mock'd. As, therefore, when a Thief or Murderer is detected, it gives an Alarm to the whole Confederacy; so when we find our own Guilts pursu'd in other Mens Persons, 'tis not a time for us to join in the Prosecution, but rather, by humble and penitent Reflexions on ourselves, to provide for our own Safety. When therefore we find ourselves, upon any Misdemeanour of our Brother, ready to mount the Tribunal, and pronounce our Sentences, let us first consider, how competent we are for the Office, calling to mind the Decision Christ once made in the like Case, *He that is without Sin, let him first cast a Stone.* Wou'd we but look into our own Hearts, we shou'd find so much Work for our Inquisition and Censure, that we shou'd not be at leisure to ramble abroad for it. And therefore as *Lycurgus* once said to one, who importun'd him to establish a popular Parity in the State, *Do thou*, says he, *begin it first in thy own Family*: So shall I advise those that will be judging, to practise first at home.

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In considering the pernicious Effects of all moral Vices to Mankind, we ought to have an especial Regard to that Sex who want most Assistance in arming themselves against them. We have hinted, in the foregoing Pages of this Article, several Instances of the Wickedness and Disingenuity of Slander, with respect to both Sexes : Let us now apply our Thoughts particularly to the weaker, which the Vanity or Partiality of Men charge as most guilty of this Sin and Folly. Curiosity, indeed, generally fills the minds of Women, and affords them a large, but empty field of Discourse. Inquisitiveness after other Peoples Concerns will seldom or never agree with Silence : Those who are commonly desirous of learning a great deal of such News, are never resolv'd to conceal it. Obloquy infallibly makes the sale of what Imprudence heaps together. Whatever this be, or let it go which way soever it will, there must needs be some Vent for it. The Minds of curious Persons are like those Vessels, which are empty'd at the same time one thinks to fill them : A great number of Women are mere Sieves, of whom let the rest be taught to take heed. That which comes in by the Ears, goes out again with them almost as soon by the Mouth ; because Indiscretion, the Mistress both of those who speak and of those who hear lightly, does not stop the Passage to Lies, either at the going out or coming in.

This Levity creates a bad opinion of their Temper, and gives no very good one of their Conscience. People ordinarily judge of them, that they do not so wholly spend their Time in hearing what is vain and superfluous, as not to catch at what is Evil : The easiness which they shew to believe a Fault in another, is look'd on as a pretty sure Indication that they are themselves guilty of the like : For there are some who hear with Delight all kinds of *Slanders* and *Scandals*, who can scarce suffer one to speak advantageously of any ; who think by blaming all the World to make an Apology for their own Crimes, and to give Authority to their Guilt by  
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the number of Criminals. When they hear the Virtues of any commended, they have presently the same Passions as the Ugly have when the Fair are courted in their Presence. Young Ladies shou'd be made sensible of the senselessness as the odiousness of this Humour. Tell them, the Virtuous will excuse Faults, instead of publishing them; that 'tis, on the other hand, the Vicious who are always pitiable: These think by their feign'd Detestation to impose upon the World, and wou'd hereby give a Proof how free they are from any Knowledge of the like Crime in themselves which they accuse in others. But their Deeds give the Lie to their Words, and this Artifice succeeds so very ill, that they are often discredited by it, instead of being vindicated. Tell them, you that are their Teachers, that the virtuous of their Sex are for driving Vice out of the World by their Charity; but that the Libertines banish Virtue by their Censoriousness. Hence it is that a chaste Lady is easily discover'd from her that wou'd be thought so, but is not; for the latter examines every thing even to the minutest Circumstances; her own Wickedness serves her for a Pattern to judge wickedly by, her Experience and her own Intrigues, teach her to give bad Interpretations to the best Matters. The Vicious are always in an Alarm; they seem afraid, as if all Women shou'd abuse their Liberty, and they can't imagine that a Walk or Conversation shou'd be innocent; they cannot apprehend why these Ladies shou'd not do the same that others have done. If they fail, they suppose it to be for lack only of Opportunity, not of Inclination.

But there are some Women not so open, who are perfect Mistresses of the Art of Slander, and use not a little Skill in their calumniating the Virtuous; these will not wound you but with gilded Weapons; they disguise their Blame or Censure under the appearance of faint Causes, and if they mention any Harm of another, they will seem to do it always with a great deal of Unwillingness and Reluctance. Care shou'd be taken to break Children

dren of the very least Tendencies to so dishonourable, so base, so dangerous a Custom : Make them see that they never can be perfect in it, unless they be first Cowards, Malicious and Hypocrites : Shew them that nothing is more commendable than to prevent Error and Vanity in their Judgment concerning others, and that nothing will contribute more to the settling of their own Reputation than Candour and Ingenuity, in censuring those of whom they may have Occasion to discourse : Represent to them, that those who have committed but one Sin, ought not therefore to be called vicious, that those who have committed many, may perhaps continue in them no longer ; the former are corrected, the latter are chang'd : Tell them farther, they can hardly ever have any Assurance, when they speak of any one's Wickedness, that they are out of danger of telling a Lie ; for that there is required but a Moment, or even a Thought, to make of a Sinner a Penitent.

Scandal is so ill-natur'd a Vice, that 'tis a blemish to the softness of the Sex, whose distinguishing Character it is, or ought to be, to be mild, gentle, and innocent. As to the other part of Mankind, Scandal is so base a Vice, 'tis below the dignity of his Nature, and sinks him almost to the depravity of the Damn'd. One cannot give too many Lessons against a Crime which is so prevalent. What follows will in a great Measure prevent the Progress of it, if it be well study'd and practis'd.

*Never say Evil of any Man, but what you certainly know.* Whenever you positively accuse and indict any Man of any Crime, tho' it be in private, and among Friends, speak as if you were upon your Oath, because God sees and hears you : This not only Charity, but Justice and Regard to Truth demand of us. He that credits an ill Report, is almost as faulty as the first Inventor of it : For tho' you do not make, yet you commonly propagate a Lie. Therefore never speak Evil of any upon common Fame, which for the most part is false, but almost always uncertain whether it be true or not.

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Not but that it is a Fault in most Cases to report the Evil of Men which is true, and which we certainly know to be so. But if we cannot prevail to make Men wholly abstain from this Fault, we wou'd be glad to compound with some Persons, and to gain this Point of them however, because it wou'd retrench nine Parts in ten of the Evil speaking that is in the World.

Before you speak evil of any Man, consider if he has not oblig'd you by some real Kindness, and then 'tis a bad Return to speak ill of him who has done us good. Consider also whether you may not come hereafter to be acquainted with him, related to him, or obliged by him, whom you have thus injur'd. And how will you then be asham'd when you reflect upon it, and perhaps have Reason also to believe, that he to whom you have done this Injury is not ignorant of it?

It is farther to be considered, whether in the change of human things you may not some time or other come to stand in need of his Favour, and how incapable this Carriage of yours towards him will render you of it: Whether it may not be in his Power to revenge a spiteful and needles Word by a shrewd Turn. If a Man makes no conscience of hurting others, yet he should in Prudence have some Consideration of himself.

We should accustom ourselves to pity the Faults of Men, and to be truly sorry for them; we then should take no Pleasure in publishing them; and this common Humanity requires of us, considering the great Infirmities of human Nature, and that we ourselves also are liable to be tempted: Considering likewise how severe a Punishment every Fault and Miscarriage is to itself, and how terribly it exposes a Man to the Wrath of God, both in this World and the other. He is not a good Christian that is not heartily sorry for the Faults even of his greatest Enemies; and if he be so, he will discover them no farther than is necessary to some good End.

Whenever we hear any Man evil spoken of, if we know any Good of him, let us say that. It is always the  
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more humane, and the more honourable Part, to stand up in the Defence and Vindication of others, than to accuse and bespatter them. Possibly the Good you may have heard of them may not be true, but it is much more probable that the Evil you have heard of them is not true neither. However, it is better to preserve the Credit of a bad Man, than to stain the Reputation of the Innocent. And if there were any need that a Man shou'd be evil spoken of, it is but fair and equal that his good and bad Qualities shou'd be mention'd together; otherwise he may be strangely misrepresented, and an indifferent Man may be made a Monster.

They that will observe nothing in a wise Man but his Oversights and Follies, nothing in a good Man but his Failings and Infirmities, may make a shift to render a very wise and good Man very despicable. If one shou'd heap together all the passionate Speeches, all the froward and imprudent Actions of the best Man, all that he had said or done amiss in his whole Life, and present it all at one View, concealing his Wisdom and Virtues; the Man in this Disguise wou'd look like a Mad-man or a Fury; and yet if his Life were fairly represented, and just in the same manner it was led, and his many and great Virtues set over-against his Infirmities and Failings, he wou'd appear to all the World an admirable and excellent Person. But how many and great soever any Man's ill Qualities are, 'tis but just that with all this heavy Load of Faults, he shou'd have the due Praise of the few real Virtues that are in him.

That you may not speak ill of any, do not delight to hear ill of them. Give no Countenance to Busy-bodies, and those who love to talk of other Mens Faults; or if you cannot decently reprove them because of their Quality, then divert the Discourse some other way; or if you cannot do that, by seeming not to mind it, you may sufficiently signify that you do not like it.

Let every Man mind himself and his own Duty and Concernment. Do but endeavour in good earnest to  
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mend yourself, and it will be work enough for one Man, and leave thee but little time to talk of others. When *Plato* withdrew from the Court of *Dionysius*, who wou'd fain have had a famous *Philosopher* for his *Flatterer*, they parted in some unkindness, and *Dionysius* bad him not speak ill of him when he was returned into *Greece*: *Plato* told him, *He had no leisure for it*; meaning that he had better things to mind, than to take up his Thoughts with the Faults of so bad a Man, so notoriously known to all the World.

Let us set a watch before the Door of our Lips, and not speak but upon Consideration: I do not mean to speak *finely*, but *fitly*. Especially, when you speak of others, consider of whom and what you are to speak. Use great Caution and Circumspection in the Matter; look well about you on every side of the thing, and on every Person in the Company, before your Words slip from you, which, when they are once out of your Lips, are for ever out of your Power.

Not that Men shou'd be fullen in Company and say nothing; or so still in Conversation, as to drop nothing but *Aphorisms* and *Oracles*; especially among Equals and Friends. We shou'd not be so reserved, as if we wou'd have it taken for a mighty Favour that we vouchsafe to say any thing. If a Man had the Understanding of an Angel, he must be contented to abate something of this Excess of Wisdom, for fear of being thought *cunning*. The true Art of Conversation, if any Body can hit upon it, seems to be this, an appearing Freedom and Openness, with a resolute Reservedness, as little appearing as possible. Our chief Concern shou'd be to weigh well what we say of others. To this end we shou'd endeavour to get our Minds furnish'd with Matter of Discourse concerning Things useful in themselves, and not hurtful to others. If we have but a Mind wise enough and good enough, we may easily find a Field large enough, for innocent Conversation, such as will harm no Body, and yet be acceptable enough to the  
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better and wiser Part of Mankind: And why should any one be at the cost of playing the fool to gratify any Body whatsoever?

A main Preservation against this Sin wou'd be the frequent Contemplation of the last and great Judgment. *Why dost thou judge thy Brother,* says St. Paul, *or why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? We shall all stand before the Judgment-Seat of Christ*; that is, at the great Day of Revelation and Retribution: and we are not to anticipate it by our private Judgment or Sentences; we have Business enough to provide our own Account against that Day: And, as it were a spiteful Folly for Malefactors that were going together to the Bar, to spend their time in exaggerating each other's Crimes; so surely it is for us who are all going towards that dreadful Tribunal, to be drawing up Charges against one another. Who knows but we may then meet with the Fate of *Daniel's* Accusers, see him we censur'd, acquitted, and ourselves condemn'd. The Penitence of the Criminal may have number'd him among the Saints, when our unretracted Uncharitableness may send us to unquenchable Flames. *There is one Lawgiver,* says the Apostle, *who is able to save and to destroy; Who art thou that judgest another?* I have mentioned another Remedy against this Evil, to try to make a Revulsion of the Humour, and draw it into another Channel. If we must needs be talking of other Peoples Faults, let it not be to defame, but to amend them, by converting our Detraction and Back-biting into Admonition and fraternal Correction. This is a way to extract Medicine out of the Viper, to consecrate even this so unhallow'd a Part of our Temper, and to turn the ungrateful meddling of a Busy-body, into the most obliging Office of a Friend. And indeed, had we that Zeal for Virtue, which we pretend when we inveigh against Vice, we should surely lay it out this way; for this only gives a Possibility of reforming the Offender. But alas, we order the matter so, as if we fear'd to lose the Occasion of Clamour, and will tell all the World,  
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but him whom it most concerns. 'Tis a deplorable thing to see how universally this necessary Christian Duty is neglected; and to that Neglect, we may, in a great degree, impute that strange overflowing of Detraction among us. We know the receiving any thing into our Charge insensibly begets a Love and Tenderness to it: A Nurse, upon this Account, comes frequently to vye Kindness with the Mother; and wou'd we but take one another thus into our Care, and, by friendly Vigilance, thus watch over each others Souls, 'tis scarce imaginable what an Endearment it wou'd create: Such certainly as wou'd infallibly supplant all our unkind Reportings, and severe Descants upon our Brethren: Since those can never take place, but when there is at least an Indifference, if not an Enmity.

Did we suppress all Curiosity and Inquisitiveness concerning others, we shou'd cut off all Supplies from Detraction, and by that means subdue it. The King of *Æthiopia*, in a Vye of Wit with the King of *Ægypt*, propos'd it as a Problem to him, to drink up the Sea; To which he reply'd, by requiring him first to stop the Access of Rivers: and he that would drain this other Ocean, must take the same Course, dam up the Avenues of those Springs which feed it. He who is always upon the Scent, hunting out some discovery of others, will be very apt to invite his Neighbour to the Quarry; and therefore 'twill be necessary for him to restrain himself from that Range: Not like jealous States, to keep Spies and Pensioners abroad to bring him Intelligence; but rather discourage all such officious Pickthanks: For the fuller he is of such Informations, the more is his Pains if he keeps them, and his Guilt if he publishes them. Cou'd Men be perswaded to affect a wholsom Ignorance in these Matters, it wou'd conduce both to their Ease and Innocence; for 'tis this Itch of the Ear, which breaks out at the Tongue; and were not Curiosity the Purveyor, Detraction wou'd soon be starv'd into a Tameness.

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The most infallible Receipt of all, is the frequent recollecting, and serious applying the grand Rule *of doing as we would be done to*: For as Detraction is the Violation of that, so the Observation of it must certainly supplant Detraction. Let us, therefore, when we find the Humour fermenting within us, and ready to break out into Declamations against our Brethren: Let us, I say, check it with this short Question, Wou'd I myself be thus us'd? The Voice from within will be like that from Heaven to St. Paul, which stopt him in the height of his Career: And this Voice every Man may hear that will not stop his Ears, or gag his Conscience, it being but the Echo of that Native Justice and Equity which is implanted in our Hearts; and when we have our Remedy so near us, and will not use it, God may well expostulate with us, as he did with the *Jews*: *Why will ye die, O House of Israel?*

I have mention'd several of those many Receipts which may be prescrib'd against this spreading Disease: But indeed, there is not so much need to multiply Remedies, as to persuade Men to apply them. We are in love with our Malady, and loth to be cur'd of the Luxury of the Tongue. But 'tis ill dallying where our Souls are concern'd: For alas, 'tis they that are wounded by those Darts which we throw at others: We take our Aim, perhaps, at our Neighbours, but indeed hit ourselves, herein verifying in the highest Sense that Axiom of the wise Man: *He that diggeth a Pit shall fall into it, and he that rolleth a Stone, it shall return upon him*. Wherefore, if we have no Tenderneſs, no Relentings to our Brethren, yet let us have some to ourselves, so much Compassion, nay, so much Respect to our precious, immortal Souls, as not to set them at so despicable a Price, to put them in Balance with the satisfying of a petulant, peevish Vanity. Surely the shewing ourselves ill-natur'd, which is all the Gains Detraction amounts to, is not so enamouring a Design, that we should sacrifice to it our highest Interest. 'Tis too much to spend our Breath in such a

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Pursuit; Let not our Souls exhale in the Vapour, but let us rather pour them out in Prayers for our Brethren, than in Accusation of them: For tho' both the one and the other will return into our own Bosoms, yet God knows to far different Purposes, even as differing as those with which we utter them. The Charity of the one, like kindly Exhalations, will descend in Showers of Blessings; but the Rigour and Asperity of the other, in a severe Doom upon ourselves: For the Apostle will tell us, *He shall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath shew'd no Mercy.*



## CENSURE *and* REPROOF.

**T**H O' Censure has been consider'd as a Branch of Detraction; yet it is in many things differing from it, tho' very little in all.

"Tis one of the worst Characters a Man or Woman can have, to be maliciously curious in examining the Actions of others, only to censure them; nothing can escape the Quickness of their jealous Eye, nor the Malice of their envenom'd Tongue: They are the common Enemy to Mankind and civil Society.

Slander is quite opposite to Politeness: If Gentlemen and Ladies reflected upon the Offence all reasonable People take at it, they would not act so vile a Part: Base Flatterers may applaud their Wit, and animate them in scandalizing others; but the Suffrage of such Wretches does not hinder their being despised by Persons of Honour. There is a great deal of Care and Skill requir'd towards the good Management of Censure. To distinguish

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tinguish is not only natural, but necessary ; and the Effect of it is, that we cannot avoid giving Judgments in our own Minds, either to absolve or condemn as the Case requires. The Difficulty is to know when and where it is fit to proclaim the Sentence : An Aversion to what is criminal, a Contempt of what is ridiculous, are the inseparable Companions of Understanding and Virtue ; but the letting them go farther than our own Thoughts, has so much danger in it, that, tho' it is neither possible nor fit to suppress them entirely, yet it is necessary they should be kept under very great Restraints. An unlimited Liberty of this kind, is little less than sending a Herald, and proclaiming War to the World, which is an angry Beast, when so provok'd. The Contest will be unequal, tho' you are never so much in the Right ; and if you begin against such an old Adversary, it will tear you in pieces with this Justification, That it is done in its own Defence. You must, therefore, take heed of laughing, except in Company that is very sure : It is throwing Snow-balls against Bullets, and it is especially the Disadvantage of Woman, that the Malice of the World will help the Brutality of those who will throw a slovenly Untruth upon her. The Sex shou'd, for this Reason, suppress their Impatience at Fools ; who, besides that they are too strong a Party to be unnecessarily provok'd, are of all others the most dangerous in this Case. A Blockhead, in his Rage, will return a dull Jest that will lie heavy, tho' there is not a Grain of Wit in it. Others will do it with more Art ; and you must not think yourself secure, because your Reputation may perhaps be out of the Reach of Ill-will ; for if it finds that Part guarded, it will seek one which is more expos'd. It flies, like a corrupt Humour in the Body, to the weakest Part. If you have a tender Side, the World will be sure to find it, and to put the worst Colour upon all you say or do, give an Aggravation to every thing that may lessen you, and a spiteful Turn to every thing that might recommend you.

Anger

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Anger lays open those Defects which Friendship cou'd not see, and Civility might be willing to forget. Malice needs no such Invitation to encourage it, neither are any Pains more superfluous, than those we take to be ill-spoken of. If Envy, which never dies, and seldom sleeps, is content sometimes to be in a Slumber, it is very unskilful to make a Noise to awake it.

Besides, your Wit will be misapply'd, if it is wholly directed to disarm the Faults of others, when it is so necessary to be often us'd, to mend and prevent your own. The sending our Thoughts too much abroad, has the same Effect, as when a Family never stays at home. Neglect and Disorder naturally follow (as they must do) within ourselves, if we do not frequently turn our Eyes inwards, to see what is amiss with us: Where it is a sign we have an unwelcome Prospect, when we do not take care to look upon it, but rather seek out Consolations in the Faults of those we converse with.

Let us avoid being the first in fixing a hard Censure. Let it be confirm'd by the general Voice, before we give into it. Neither are you then to give Sentence like a Magistrate, or as if you had a special Authority to bestow a good or ill Name at your Discretion. Do not dwell too long upon a weak Side; touch and go away. Take pleasure to stay longer where you can commend; like Bees, that fix only upon those Herbs, out of which they may extract the Juice their Honey is compos'd of. A Virtue stuck with Bristles is too rough for this Age; it must be adorn'd with some Flowers, or else it will be unwillingly entertain'd. Thus, where it may be fit to strike, it must be done gently; and assure yourself, that where you care to do it, you will wound others more, and hurt yourself less by soft Strokes, than by being harsh or violent.

The Triumph of Wit is to make your Good-nature subdue your Censure; to be quick in seeing Faults, and slow in exposing them. You are to consider, that the invisible thing called a good Name, is made up of the

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Breath of Numbers that speak well of you. If by a disobliging Word you silence the Meanest, the Gale will be less strong which is to bear up your Esteem : And tho' nothing is so vain, as the eager Pursuit of empty *Applause*, yet to be well thought of, and to be kindly us'd by the World, is like a Glory about a Woman's Head ; 'tis a Perfume she carries about with her, and leaves where-ever she goes ; 'tis a Charm against Ill-will. Malice may empty her Quiver, but cannot wound. The Dirt will not stick ; the Jest will not take. Without the Consent of the World a Scandal does not go deep ; it is only a slight Stroke upon the injur'd Party, and returns with the greater Force upon those that gave it. I have read the Character of *Aricia*, and was pleas'd with that Part of it which related to Scandal.

She never suffer'd any Body, be they who they wou'd, to be slander'd in her Presence : She had a thousand ways to turn off the Conversation, when it roll'd upon Scandal. If the Persons who gave the Offence were below her, she always impos'd Silence upon them ; if their Quality demanded more Respect, she shew'd by her own Silence, and by her Looks, that she did not approve of it ; always finding out Reasons to justify those that were accus'd.

Persons of Dignity and Rank are apt to take great Liberties, with respect to their Inferiors: However they ought to be on their Guard, and not to mortify any one by shocking Words. Their Condition does not excuse their being unpolite. Their Contempt of People creates a Disgust, which is the hardest thing in the World to wear off. A passionate Expression is often forgiven, but Rallery in cold Blood never ; it being a sure Sign of want of Esteem.

Silence is an excellent Remedy against Slander. Complaints and Reproaches sharpen instead of blunting it. People let a Man alone, when they see he takes no notice of the disobliging things that are said to him : 'Tis a great Virtue, and costs little, to speak mildly to those

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those that talk impertinently to you. We must live with the Passionate and Whimsical, as well as the Good-natur'd and Wise; we shou'd pity their Weakness and their Whims; and to slight them, will be a more effectual way to mortify them, than to reprove.

Slander and Censure use many Arts to conceal their Malignity: But whether they make use of direct and exprefs Terms, or of obscure and oblique; whether by way of downright Reproach, or with some crafty Preface of Recommendation; if they have the Effect to vilify, the Manner of Address does not alter the Case. The one may be more dextrous, but is not one Jot less faulty. For many times the deeper Wounds are given by these smother, and more artificial ways of Slander, as by asking Questions, *Have you not heard so and so of such a Man? I say no more; I only ask the Question.* Or by general Intimations, *That they are loth to say what they have heard of such a one; are very sorry for it, and do not at all believe it,* if you will believe them. This many times, without telling the thing, but leaving you in the dark to suspect the worst.

These and such like Arts, tho' they may seem to be gentler and tenderer ways of using Mens Reputation, yet in truth, they are the most malicious and effectual Methods of Slander; because they insinuate something that is much worse than is said, and yet are very apt to create in unwary Men, a strong belief of something that is very bad, tho' they know not what it is. It matters not in what Fashion Slander is dress'd up, if it tends to defame a Man, and diminish his Reputation.

Censure, in some Cases, is not only lawful, but very commendable. 'Tis many times our Duty to do it, in order to the probable Amendment of the Person that has committed the Offence. A Man may, and ought to be told of his Faults privately; or where it may not be fit for us to use that Boldness and Freedom, we may reveal his Faults to one who is more fit and proper to reprove him, and will probably make no other use of

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this Discovery, but in order to his Amendment. This is so far from being a Breach of Charity, that it is one of the best Testimonies of it: For, perhaps, the Party may not be guilty of what is reported of him, and then it is a Kindness to give him an Opportunity of vindicating himself; or if he be guilty, perhaps being privately and prudently told of it, he may reform. In this Case, the Son of *Sirach* advises to reveal Mens Faults, *Admonish a Friend*, says he, it may be he hath not done it; and if he have done it, that he do it no more: *Admonish a Friend, it may be he hath not said it; and if he have, that he speak it not again: Admonish a Friend, for many times it is a Slander, and believe not every Tale.*

We must take care that this be done out of Kindness, and that nothing of our own Passion be mingled with it: That under Pretence of reproofing and reforming Men, we do not reproach and revile them, and tell them of their Faults in such a manner, as if we did it to shew our *Authority* rather than our *Charity*. It requires a great deal of Address and gentle Application, so to manage the Business of Reproof, as not to irritate and exasperate the Person whom we reprove, instead of curing him.

This is our Duty; when, as has been hinted, we are legally call'd to bear Witness, concerning the Fault and Crime of another. A good Man would not be an Accuser, unless the Publick Good, or the Prevention of some great Evil, should require it: And then, the plain Reason of the thing will sufficiently justify a voluntary Accusation. Otherwise, it has always, among well-manner'd People, been esteem'd very odious, for a Man to be officious in this kind, and a forward Informer concerning the Misdemeanor of others. Magistrates may sometimes think it fit to give Encouragement to such Persons, and to set one bad Man to catch another; because such Men are fittest for such dirty Work; but they  
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can never inwardly approve them, nor will they ever make them their Friends and Confidants.

When a Man is call'd to give Testimony in this kind, in obedience to the Laws, and out of reverence to the Oath taken in such Cases, he is so far from deserving Blame for so doing, that it would be an unpardonable Fault in him to conceal the Truth, or any part of it.

It is lawful to publish the Faults of others, in our necessary Defence and Vindication. When a Man cannot conceal another's Faults, without betraying his own Innocency, no Charity requires him to suffer himself to be defam'd, to save the Reputation of another Man. *Charity begins at home*; and tho' a Man had never so much Goodness, he wou'd first secure his own good Name, and then be concern'd for other Mens. It would be well for the World if our Charity would rise thus high, and no Man would hurt another's Reputation but where his own is in real Danger.

Censure and Reproof are lawful, as well for Caution and Warning to a third Person, as for Amendment to the first: The former may be in danger to be infected by the Company, or ill Example of another, or may be greatly prejudiced by reposing too much Confidence in him.

In ordinary Conversation, Men may mention that Ill of others, which is already made as publick as it well can be. One Friend may, in freedom, speak to another, of the Miscarriage of a third Person, where he is secure no ill use will be made of it, and that it will go no farther to his Prejudice. One of the deepest and most common Causes of Censures, is Ill-nature and Cruelty of Disposition. Ill-nature, by a general Mistake, passes for Wit, as Cunning does for Wisdom; tho' in truth they are nothing akin to one another, but as far distant as Vice and Virtue.

There is no greater Evidence of the bad Temper of Mankind, than the general proneness of Men to this Vice. They commonly incline to Censoriousness, and

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the uncharitable Side ; which shews human Nature to be strangely distorted from its original Rectitude and Innocence. The wit of Man does more naturally vent itself in *Satire* and Censure, than in Praise and *Panegyrick*. When Men set themselves to commend, it comes hardly from them, and not without great Force or Straining ; and if any thing be fitly said in that kind, it does hardly relish with most Men : But in the way of Invective, the invention of Men is a plentiful and never-failing Spring. This kind of Wit is not more easy than it is acceptable ; it is greedily entertain'd, and greatly applauded : Every Man is glad to hear others abus'd, not considering how soon it may come to his own turn, to lie down and make sport for others.

Censure is almost become the general entertainment of all Companies ; and the great and serious business of most Meetings and Visits, after the necessary Ceremonies and Compliments are over, is to sit down and backbite all the World. 'Tis a common Saying, among certain People, whose Birth and Education should teach them better things, *Come, let us rally all the World*. And it was a very sharp Reproof given by a Man of Wit in a publick Assembly, *That he was afraid to go out, lest he should be rail'd at*. 'Tis the Sauce of Conversation, and all Discourse is counted but flat and dull, which has not something of Piquancy in it against somebody. For Men generally love rather to hear Evil of others than Good, and are secretly pleas'd with ill Reports, drinking them in with Delight : Tho' at the same time they have so much Justice, as to hate those that propagate them, and so much Wit, as to conclude that those very Persons will do the same for them in another Place and Company. Especially if it concerns one of another Party, and that differs from us in matters of Religion. In this case all *Parties* seem to be agreed, that they do God great Service in blasting the Reputation of their Adversaries : And tho' they all pretend to be Christians, and the Disciples of him who taught nothing but Kindness

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ness and Meekness, and Charity, yet it is strange to see with what a savage and murderous Disposition they will fly at one another's Reputation, and tear it in pieces. Whatever other Scruples they may have, they make none to bespatter one another, in the most bitter and scandalous manner.

If they hear any good of their Adversaries with what Nicety and Caution do they receive it? How many Objections do they raise against it? And with what Coldness do they at last admit it? *It is very well, say they, if it be true: I shall be glad to hear it confirm'd; I never heard so much good of him before: You are a good Man yourself, but have a care you be not deceiv'd.* It is well, if to balance the matter, and set things even, they do not clap some Infirmary and Fault in the other Scale, that so the Enemy may not go off with flying Colours. On the other side, every Man is a good and substantial Author of all ill Reports. I do not apply this to any one sort of Men, tho' all are to blame this way. To speak impartially, the Zealots of all *Parties* have got a *scurvy Trick* of lying for the Truth.

This has appear'd most visibly in latter times. There has a lying Spirit gone out among us, and Scandal and Zeal have made terrible Havock of our Neighbour's Reputation. *I have observ'd, says a reverend Father of our Church, the Priests and Bigots of the Church of Rome, to be the ablest in this way, and to have the strongest Faith for a lusty Falshood and Calumny: Others will bandy a false Report, and toss it from one Hand to another; but I never knew any that would so hug a Lye, and be so very fond of it.* Had that learned and pious Prelate been a witness of the fondness of certain Zealots of our own Days for a Lye; had he seen how they bandy it, how they hug it, would the Papists have been the only Party that would have deserv'd his Reproof?

Another shrewd Sign that Ill-nature lies at the root of this Vice is, that we easily forget the Good which is said of others, and seldom make mention of it; but the

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contrary sticks with us, lies uppermost in our Memories, and is ready to come out upon all Occasions. And what is yet more ill-natur'd and unjust, many times, when we do not believe it ourselves, we tell it to others with this charitable Caution, *That we hope it is not true.* But in the mean time we give it our *Pass*, and venture it to take its Fortune, to be believ'd or not, according to the Charity of those into whose Hands it comes. Those who cannot have a good Opinion of themselves, are very unwilling to have so of any one else. For this Reason, they endeavour to bring Men to a Level, hoping it will be some Justification of them, if they can but render others as bad as themselves. It is a cruel Pleasure which some Men take, in worrying the Reputation of others much better than themselves; and this only to divert the Company. The injury of Slander descends to a Man's Children, because the good or ill Name of the Father is derived down to them: and many times the best he has to leave them, is the Reputation of his unblemish'd Virtue and Worth: And do we make no Conscience, to rob his innocent Children of the best part of this small Patrimony, and of all the Kindness that wou'd have been done them for their Father's sake, if his Reputation had not been so undeservedly stain'd? Is it no Crime, by the breath of our Mouth, at once to blast a Man's Reputation, and to ruin his Posterity? Can we make a jest of so serious a Matter? Of an Injury so very hard to be repented of as it ought? Because in such a Case, no Repentance will be acceptable without Restitution, if it be in our Power; and perhaps it will undo us in this World to make it; and if we do not, will be our Ruin in the other.

Besides the injury of Slander, it is commonly a very high Provocation; and the consequence of that may be as bad as we can imagine, and may end in dangerous and desperate Quarrels. This Reason the wise Son of *Sirach* gives, why we should defame no Man, *Whether it be,* says he, *to a Friend or Foe, talk not of other Mens Lives:*  
*For*

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*For he hath heard and observ'd thee:* That is, one way or other it will probably come to his Knowledge, and *when the time cometh he will shew his Hatred:* That is, he will take the first Opportunity to revenge it.

At the best, 'tis always matter of Grief to the Person that's defam'd; and Christianity, which is the *best-natur'd Institution in the World*, forbids us the doing those things, whereby we may grieve one another. A Man's good Name is a tender thing, and a Wound there sinks deep into the Spirit, even of a wise and good Man. The more innocent any Man is in this kind, the more sensible is he of this hard Usage; because he never treats others so, nor is he conscious to himself that he has deserv'd it. The consequences of this Vice are as bad, or worse to ourselves. Whoever is wont to speak Evil of others, gives a bad Character of himself, even to those whom he desires to please; who, if they be wise enough, will conclude, that he speaks of them to others, as he does of others to them. And were it not for that fond Partiality which Men have for themselves, no Man could be so blind as not to see this. A reproachful and slanderous Speech has cost many a Man a *Duel*, and in that the loss of his own Life, or the murder of another, perhaps too the loss of his own Soul. Tho' neither of those great Mischiefs should happen, yet reproachful Language may be inconvenient enough many other ways; and no Quality does ordinarily recommend one more to the Favour and Good-will of Men, than to be free from this Vice. Every one desires such a Man's Friendship, and is apt to repose a great Trust and Confidence in him. When he is dead, Men will praise him; and next to Piety towards God, and Righteousness to Man, nothing is thought a more significant Commendation, than that he was never, or very rarely, heard to speak ill of any. It was a singular Character of a certain Gentleman, *He knew not what it was to give any Man an ill Word.*

IGNO.



## IGNORANCE.

**I**T would be an endless Task should we undertake to give Instances of the great Improvements which Women have made of Education, there being hardly any Science in which some of them have not excell'd. 'Tis very plain, therefore, that Nature has given them as good Talents as Men have, and if they are still call'd the weaker Sex, 'tis because the other, which assumes the name of the wiser, hinders them from improving their Minds in useful Knowledge, by accustoming them to the Study and Practice of Vanity and Trifles.

How can they be instructed in any solid Principles, whose very Instructors are Froth and Emptiness? Whereas Women, were they rightly educated, and their Minds, from their Childhood, well inform'd, they wou'd be Proof against all those Batteries, see through and scorn those little silly Artifices which are us'd to ensnare and deceive them. A Woman so instructed wou'd value herself only on her Virtue, and consequently be most chary of what she esteems so much. She wou'd know that not what others say, but what herself does, must build her up a good Name, and be the only thing that can exalt her; the loudest Encomium being not half so satisfactory as the calm and secret *plaudit* of her own Mind; which moving on true principles of Honour and Virtue, wou'd not fail, on a Review of itself, to anticipate that delightful Eulogy she shall one Day hear.

Whence is it but from Ignorance, from want of Understanding, how to compare and judge of Things, to  
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choose a right End, to proportion the Means to the End, and to rate every thing according to its proper Value, that we quit the Substance for the Shadow, Reality for Appearance, and embrace those very things, which, if we understood, we shou'd hate and avoid, but now are reconcil'd to merely, because they usurp the Name, tho' they have nothing of the Nature, of those venerable Objects we desire and seek: Were it not for this Delusion, is it probable a Lady, who passionately desires to be admir'd, shou'd ever consent to such Actions as render her base and contemptible? Wou'd she be so absurd as to think either to get Love or keep it by those Methods, which occasion Loathing, and consequently end in Hatred? Wou'd she reckon it a piece of her Grandeur, or hope to gain Esteem by such Excesses as really lessen her in the eyes of all considerate and judicious Persons? Wou'd she be so silly as to look big, and think herself the better Person because she has more Money to bestow profusely, or the good Luck to have a newer Mantua-Maker or Milliner, than her Neighbour? Wou'd she, who, by the Regard she pays to Wit, seems to make some Pretences to it, undervalue her Judgment so much as to admit the Scurrility and profane noisy Nonsense of Men, whose Foreheads are better than their Brains, to pass under that Character? Wou'd she be so weak as to imagine that a few airy Fancies, join'd with a great deal of Impudence and Ill-nature, the right Definition of modern Wit, can bespeak him a Man of Sense, who runs counter to all the Sense and Reason that ever appear'd in the World? Than which nothing can be an Argument of greater Shallowness, unless it be to regard and esteem him for it. Wou'd a Woman, if she truly understood herself, be affected either with the Praises or the Calumnies of those worthless Persons, whose Lives are a direct contradiction to Reason, a very sink of Corruption, by whom one wou'd blush to be commended, lest they shou'd be mistaken for Partners in or Connivers at their Crime? Will she, who has a  
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jot of Discernment, think to satisfy her greedy desire of Pleasure with those promising things that have again and again deluded her? Or will she, to obtain such Bubbles, run the risk of forfeiting Joys infinitely satisfying and eternal? In fine, did not Ignorance impose upon us, we wou'd never lavish out the greatest part of our Time and Care on the Decorations of a Tenement, in which our Lease is so very short, and which for all our Industry may lose its Beauty before that Lease is out, while we neglect a more glorious and durable Mansion; we wou'd never be so curious of the House, and so careless of the Inhabitant, whose Beauty is capable of great Improvement, and will endure for ever without Diminution or Decay.

Thus Ignorance, and a narrow Education, lay the foundation of Vice, and Imitation and Custom rear it up: Custom, that merciless Torrent, carries all before it, and indeed can be resisted by none but such as have a great deal of Prudence, and a rooted Virtue. 'Tis but reasonable that she, who is not capable of giving better Rules, shou'd follow those she sees before her, lest she only change the Instance, and retain the Absurdity. 'Twou'd puzzle a considerable Person to account for all that Sin and Folly that is in the World, which certainly has nothing in itself to recommend it, did not Custom help to solve the Difficulty. For Virtue, without question, has on all Accounts the preeminence of Vice. 'Tis abundantly more pleasant in the *Act*, as well as more advantageous in the *Consequences*, as any one, who will but rightly use her Reason in a serious Reflexion on herself and the nature of Things, may easily perceive. 'Tis Custom therefore, that tyrant Custom, which is the grand Motive to all those irrational Choices which we daily see made in the World, so very contrary to our present Interest and Pleasure, as well as to our future. We think it an unpardonable Mistake not to do as our Neighbours do, and part with our Peace and Pleasure as well as our Innocence and Virtue, merely

meerly in compliance with an unreasonable Fashion, and having inur'd ourselves to Folly, we know not how to quit it. We go on in Vice, not because we find that Satisfaction in it which we hope for from it, but because we are unacquainted with the superior Joys of Virtue.

Add to this the hurry and noise of the World, which does generally so busy and pre-engage us, that we have little Time, and less Inclination, to stand still and reflect on our own Minds. Those impertinent Amusements which have seiz'd us, keep their Hold so well, and so constantly buz about our Ears, that we cannot attend to the dictates of our Reason, nor to the soft Whispers, and winning Persuasives of the divine Spirit; by whose Assistance, were we dispos'd to make use of it, we might shake off these Follies, and regain our Freedoms. But alas! to complete our Misfortunes, by a continual application to Vanity and Folly, we quite spoil the Contexture and Frame of our Minds, so loosen and dissipate them, that nothing solid and substantial will stay in them. By an habitual Inadvertency we render ourselves incapable of any serious and improving Thought, till our Minds themselves become as light and frothy, as those Things they are conversant about. To all which, if we farther add the great Industry that bad People use to corrupt the good, and that unaccountable Backwardness which appears in too many good Persons, to stand up for and propagate the Piety they profess; so strangely are things transpos'd, that Virtue puts on the Blushes which belong to Vice, and Vice insults with the authority of Virtue; we shall have a pretty fair Account of the Causes of our Non-improvement.

When a poor young Lady is taught to value herself on nothing but her Clothes, and to think she's very fine when well accoutred; when she hears it said, that 'tis Wisdom enough for her to know how to dress herself, that she may become amiable in his Eyes, to whom it appertains to be knowing and learned; who can blame her if she spends her Time and Money upon such Accomplishments,

complishments, and sometimes extends it farther than her Misinformers desire she shou'd? When she sees the Vain and the Gay making *parade* in the World, and attended with the Courtship and Admiration of the gazing Herd, no wonder that her tender Eyes are dazzled with the Pageantry, and, wanting Judgment to pass a due Estimate on them and their Admirers, she longs to be such a fine and celebrated thing as they? What tho' she be sometimes told of another World, she has however a more lively Perception of this, and may well think, that if her Instructors were in earnest when they tell her of *hereafter*, they wou'd not be so busy'd and concern'd about what happens *here*. She is, it may be, taught the principles and duties of Religion, but not acquainted with the Reasons and Grounds of them, being told 'tis enough for her to believe; to examine why and wherefore belongs not to her. And thus, tho' her Piety may be tall and spreading, yet because it wants Foundation and Root, the first rude Temptation overthrows and blasts it, or perhaps the short-liv'd *Gourd* decays and withers of its own accord. But why shou'd she be blam'd for setting no great Value upon her Soul, whose noblest Faculty, her Understanding, is render'd useless to her? Or censur'd for relinquishing a course of Life, whose Prerogatives she was never acquainted with; and tho' highly reasonable in itself, was put upon the embracing it with as little Reason as she now forsakes it? For if her Religion itself be taken up as the mode of the Country, 'tis no strange thing that she lays it down again in conformity to the Fashion. Whereas she whose Reason is suffer'd to display itself, to enquire into the Grounds and Motives of Religion, to make a disquisition of its Graces, and search out its hidden Branches; who is a Christian out of Choice, not in Conformity to those among whom she lives; and cleaves to Piety because 'tis her Wisdom, her Interest, her Joy, not because she has been accusom'd to it; she who is not only eminently and unmoveably good, but able to  
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give a Reason why she is so, is too firm and stable to be mov'd by the pitiful allurements of Sin, too wise and too well bottom'd to be undermin'd and supplanted by the strongest efforts of Temptation. Doubtless, a truly christian Life requires a clear Understanding, as well as regular Affections, that both together may move the Will to a direct choice of Good, and a stedfast Adherence to it. For tho' the Heart may be honest, it is but by chance that the Will is right if the Understanding be ignorant and cloudy. And what's the reason that we sometimes see Persons unhappily falling off from their Piety, but because 'twas their Affections, not their Judgment, that inclin'd them to be religious? Reason and Truth are firm and immutable: She who bottoms on them is on sure Ground. Humour and Inclination are sandy Foundations, and she who is sway'd by her Affections, more than by her Judgment, owes the happiness of her Soul, in a great measure, to the temper of her Body. Her Piety may perhaps blaze high, but will not last long; for the Affections are various and changeable, mov'd by every Object, and the last Comer easily undoes whatever his Predecessor has done before. Such Persons are always in extremes, they are either violently good, or quite cold and indifferent; a perpetual Trouble to themselves and others, by indecent Raptures, or unnecessary Scruples: There is no Beauty and Order in their Lives, all is rapid and unaccountable; they are now very furious in such a Course, but they cannot tell why, and anon as violent in the other Extreme. Having more *Heat* than *Light*, their Zeal outruns their Knowledge; and instead of representing Piety as it is in itself, the most lovely and inviting thing imaginable, they expose it to the contempt and ridicule of the censorious World. Their Devotion becomes ricketted, starv'd and contracted in some of its vital Parts, and disproportion'd and overgrown in less material Instances: Whilst one Duty is overdone to commute for the neglect of another, and the mistaken Person thinks  
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the being often on her Knees, atones for all the miscarriages of her Conversation: Not considering that 'tis in vain to petition for those Graces which we take no care to practise, and a Mockery to adore those Perfections we run counter to; that the true end of all our Prayers and external Devotion, is to work our Minds to a true christian Temper, to obtain for us the empire of our Passions, and to reduce all irregular Inclinations, that so we may be as like God in Purity and all his imitable Excellencies, as is consistent with the imperfection of a Creature.

Having discours'd of the advantages of good Understanding towards the regular conduct of Life: Let us now consider how it may be improv'd. If Perfection consists in the Clearness and Largeness of its View; it improves proportionably as its Ideas become clearer and more extensive: But this is not so to be understood, as if all sorts of Notices contributed to our Improvement: There are some things which make us no wiser when we know them, others which 'tis best to be ignorant of. But that Understanding seems to be most exalted, which has the clearest and most extensive view of such Truths as are suitable to its Capacity, and necessary and convenient to be known in this present State: For being as we are, but Creatures, our Understanding, in its greatest Perfection, has only a limited Excellency. It has, indeed, a vast Extent, and it were not amiss if we tarry'd a little in the contemplation of its Powers and Capacities, provided that the Prospect did not make us giddy, that we remember from whom we have receiv'd them, and balance those lofty Thoughts, which a view of our Intellectuals may occasion, with the depressing ones which the irregularity of our Morals will suggest; that we learn from this Inspection how indecorous it is to busy this bright side of us in mean Things, seeing it is capable of such noble ones.

Human Nature is a wonderful Composure, admirable in its outward Structure, but much more excellent  
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in the Beauties of its inward ; and she, who considers in whose Image her Soul was created, and whose Blood was shed to redeem it, cannot prize it too much, nor forget to pay it her utmost Regard. There's nothing in this material World to be compar'd to it. All the gay things we dote on, and for which we many Times expose our Souls to Ruin, are of no Consideration in respect of it : They are not the Good of the Soul : Its Happiness depends not on them, but they often deceive and withdraw it from its true Good. It was made for the Contemplation and Enjoyment of its God, and all Souls are capable of this, tho' in a different Degree, and by Measures somewhat different.

Truth in general is the Object of the Understanding, but all Truths are not equally evident, because of the Limitation of the human Mind ; which tho' it can gradually take in many Truths, yet cannot, any more than our Sight, attend to many things at once. There are some particular Truths of which God has not thought fit to communicate such Ideas to us, as are necessary to the Disquisition of them : For knowing nothing within us, but by the Idea we have of it, and judging only according to the Relation we find between two or more Ideas : When we cannot discover the Truth we search after by Intention, or the immediate Comparison of two Ideas, 'tis necessary that we shou'd have a third by which to compare them, but if this middle Idea be wanting, tho' we have sufficient Evidence of those two which we wou'd compare, because we have a clear and distinct Conception of them ; yet we are ignorant of those Truths which wou'd arise from their Comparison, because we want a third by which to compare them.

To give an Instance of this in a Point of great Consequence, and of late very much controverted, tho' to no purpose, because we take the wrong Method, and wou'd make that the Object of Science, which is properly the Object of Faith, the Doctrine of the Trinity. Revelation, which is but an Exaltation and Improvement

ment of Reason, has told us, That the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and our Idea of the Godhead of any one of these Persons, is as clear as our Idea of any of the other: Both Reason and Revelation assure us, That God is one simple Essence, Undivided, and Infinite in all Perfection; this is the natural Idea which we have of God: How then can the Father be God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, when yet there is but one God? That these two Propositions are true, we are certain, both because God, who cannot lie has reveal'd them, and because we have as clear an Idea of them, as it is possible a finite Mind shou'd have of an infinite Nature. But we cannot find out how this shou'd be by the bare Comparison of these two Ideas, without the help of a third by which to compare them: This God has not thought fit to impart to us; the Prospect it would have given us wou'd have been too dazzling, too bright for Mortality to bear, and we ought to acquiesce in the divine Will. So then we are all assur'd, that these two Propositions are true; *There is but one God, and there are three Persons in the Godhead*; but we know not the Manner how these things are: Nor can our Acquiescence be thought unreasonable, nor the Doctrine we subscribe to be run down as absurd and contradictory by every little warm Disputer and Pretender to reason, whose Life is, perhaps, a continual Contradiction to it, and he knows little of it besides the Name. For we ought not to think it strange, that God has folded up his own Nature, not in Darkness, but in an adorable, inaccessible Light, since his Wisdom sees it fit to keep us ignorant of our own. We know and feel the Union between our Soul and Body, but who amongst us sees so clearly as to find out with Certitude and Exactness, the secret Ties which unite two such different Substances, or how they are able to act upon each other? We are conscious of our own Liberty; whoever denies it, denies that we are capable of Rewards and Punishments, degrades his  
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Nature, and makes himself but a more curious Piece of Mechanism; and none but Atheists will call in question the Providence of God, or deny that he governs *All*, even the most free of all his Creatures. But who can reconcile me these? or adjust the Limits between God's Prescience, and Man's Free-will? Our Understandings are sufficiently illuminated to lead us to the Fountain of Life and Light. We do, or may know enough to fill our Souls with the noblest Conceptions, the humblest Adoration, and the entirest Love of the Author of our being, and what can we desire farther? If we make so ill a Use of that Knowledge which we have, as to be puffed up with it, how dangerous wou'd it be for us to have more Knowledge in a State in which we have so little Humility? But if vain Man will pretend to Wisdom, let him first learn to know the length of his own Line. Tho' the human Intellect has a large Extent, yet being limited, as we have already said; this Limitation is the Cause of those different Modes of thinking, which, for Distinction sake, we call Faith, Science, and Opinion: For in this present and imperfect State in which we know not any thing by Intuition, or immediate View, except a few first Principles, which we call Self-evident, the most of our Knowledge is acquir'd by Reasoning and Deduction: And these three Modes of Understanding, Faith, Science, and Opinion, are no otherwise distinguish'd than by the different Degrees of Clearness and Evidence, in the Premises from which the Conclusion is drawn.

Knowledge, in a proper and restricted Sense, and as appropriated to Science, signifies that clear Perception which is follow'd by a firm Assent to Conclusions rightly drawn from Premises of which we have clear and distinct Ideas: Which Premises or Principles must be so clear and evident, that supposing us reasonable Creatures, and free from Prejudices and Passions, which, for the Time they predominate, as good as deprive us of our Reason,

we cannot withhold our Assent from them without manifest Violence to our Reason.

But if the Nature of the Thing be such, as that it admits of no undoubted Premises to argue from, or, at least, we do not at present know of any, or that the Conclusion does not so necessarily follow, as to give a perfect Satisfaction to the Mind, and to free it from all Hesitation, that which we think of it is then call'd Opinion.

Again, if the Medium we make use of to prove the Proposition be Authority, the Conclusion which we draw from it, is said to be believed: This is what we call Faith, and when the Authority is God's, a divine Faith.

Moral Certainty is a Species of Knowledge, whose Proofs are of a compounded Nature, in part resembling those which belong to Science, and partly those of Faith. We do not make the whole Process ourselves, but depend on another for the immediate Proof; but we ourselves deduce the mediate from Circumstances and Principles as certain, and almost as evident as those of Science, and which lead us to the immediate Proofs and make it unreasonable to doubt of them. Indeed, we do not seldom deceive ourselves in this Matter, by inclining alternately to both Extremes. Sometimes we reject Truths which are morally certain, as conjectural and probable only, because they have not a physical and mathematical Certainty, which they are incapable of: At another Time we embrace the slightest Conjectures, and any thing which looks with Probability, as moral Certainties and real Virtues, if Fancy, Passion, or Interest recommend them. So ready are we to be determin'd by these, rather than by solid Reason.

In this Enumeration of the several Ways of Knowing, the Senses are not reckon'd, in regard that we are more properly said to be conscious of, than to know such Things as we perceive by Sensation: And also because that Light which we suppose to be let into our Ideas by our Senses, is indeed very dim and fallacious, and not  
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to be rely'd on 'till it has past the Test of Reason; neither is there any Mode of Knowledge which may not be reduced to those already mentioned. Now, tho' there is a great Difference between Opinion and Science, true Science being immutable, but Opinion variable and uncertain; yet there is not such a Difference between Faith and Science as is usually suppos'd; the Difference consists not in the Certainty, but in the way of Proof; the Objects of Faith are as rationally and as firmly prov'd as the Objects of Science, tho' by another way: As Science demonstrates Things that are seen, so Faith is the Evidence of such as are not seen: And he who rejects the Evidence of Faith in such things as belong to its Cognisance, is as unreasonable as he who denies Propositions in Geometry that are prov'd with mathematical Exactness.

There is nothing true which is not in itself demonstrable, or which we should not pronounce to be true, had we a clear and intuitive View of it. But, as was said above, we see very few Things by Intuition, neither are we furnish'd with *Mediums* to make the Process ourselves in demonstrating Truths, and therefore there are some Truths, which we must either be totally ignorant of, or else receive them on the Testimony of another Person, to whose understanding they are clear and manifest, tho' not to ours. And if this Person be one, who can neither be deceiv'd nor deceive, we are as certain of those Conclusions which we prove by his Authority, as we are of those we demonstrate by our own Reason; nay more certain by how much his Reason is more comprehensive and infallible than our own.

Science is the following the Process ourselves upon clear and evident Principles. Faith is a Dependence on the Credit of another, in such Matters as are out of View. And when we have very good Reason to submit to the Testimony of the Person we believe, Faith is as firm, and those Truths it discovers to us as truly intel-

intelligible, and as strongly prov'd in their kind, as Science.

In a word, as every Sense, so every Capacity of the Understanding, has its proper Objects. The Objects of Science are things within our View, of which we may have clear and distinct Ideas, and nothing shou'd be determin'd here without Clearness and Evidence. To be able to repeat any Person's Dogma, without forming a distinct Idea of it ourselves, is not to know, but to remember; and to have a confus'd indeterminate Idea, is to conjecture, not to understand.

The Objects of Faith are as certain, and as truly intelligible in themselves, as those of Science, as has been said already; only we become persuaded of the Truth of them by another Method: We do not see them so clearly and distinctly as to be unable to disbelieve them. Faith has a Mixture of the Will, that it may be rewardable; for who will thank us for giving our Assent where it was impossible to withhold it? Faith then may be said to be a sort of Knowledge capable of Reward, and Men are Infidels not for want of Conviction, but through an Unwillingness to believe.

As it is a Fault to believe in Matters of Science, where we may expect Demonstration and Evidence, so it is a Reproach to our Understanding, and a Proof of our Disingenuity, to require that sort of Process peculiar to Science, for the Confirmation of such Truths as are not the proper Objects of it: It is as ridiculous as to reject Musick because we cannot taste or smell it, or to deny there is such a thing as Beauty because we do not hear it. He who wou'd see with his Ears, and hear with his Eyes, may indeed set up in *Bedlam* for a Man of extraordinary Reach, a sagacious Person who will not be imposed upon, one who must have more authentick Proofs than his dull Forefathers were content with. But Men of dry Reason and a moderate Genius, I suppose, will think Nature has done very well in allotting to each Sense its proper Employment; and such as these will as readily

readily acknowledge, that it is as honourable for the Soul to believe what is truly the Object of Faith, as it is for her to know what is really the Object of her Knowledge. And were we not strangely perverse, we should not scruple divine Authority, when we daily submit to human. Whoever has not seen *Paris*, has nothing but human Authority to assure him there is such a Place, and yet he wou'd be laugh'd at as ridiculous who shou'd call it in Question; tho' he may, as well in this as in another Case, pretend that his Informers have Designs to serve, intend to impose on him, and mock his Credulity. Nay how many of us daily make that a Matter of Faith, which indeed belongs to Science, by adhering blindly to the Dictates of some famous Philosopher in Physical Truths, the Principles of which we have as much Right to examine, and to make Deductions from them, as he had?

In a word, we may know enough for all the Purposes of Life, enough to busy this active Faculty of Thinking, to employ and entertain the spare Intervals of Time, and to keep us from Rust and Idleness, but we must not pretend to fathom all Depths with our own short Line; we shou'd be wise unto Sobriety, and reckon we know very little, if we go about to make our own Reason the Standard of all Truth. It is very certain that nothing is true but what is conformable to Reason; that is to the divine Reason, of which ours is but a short faint Ray; and it is as certain, that there are many Truths which human Reason cannot comprehend. Therefore to be thoroughly sensible of the Capacity of the Mind, to discern precisely its Bounds and Limits, and to direct our Studies and Inquiries accordingly; to know what is to be known, and to believe what is to be believ'd, is the Property of a Wise Person. To be content with too little Knowledge, or to aspire to overmuch, is equally a Fault; to make that Use of our Understandings which God has fitted and design'd them for, is the Medium which we ought to take. For the Difference between a

Plowman and a Doctor does not seem to consist in this, that the Business of the one is to search after Knowledge, and the other has nothing to do with it. No: whoever has a rational Soul, ought surely to employ it about some Truth or other, to procure for it right Ideas, that its Judgments may be true, tho' its Knowledge be not very extensive. But herein lies the Difference, that tho' Truth is the Object of every individual Understanding, yet all are not equally enlarg'd, nor able to comprehend so much; and they, whose Capacities and Circumstances of living do not fit them for it, lie not under that Obligation of extending their View, which Persons of a larger Reach and greater Leisure do. There is indeed frequently a Mistake in this matter. People who are not fit, will be puzzling their Heads to little purpose; and those who are, prove slothful, and decline the Trouble. Thus will it be if we do not thoroughly understand ourselves, but suffer Pride or Ease to make the Estimate.

Having consider'd the Capacity of the Understanding in general, we must descend to the View of our own Particular; observing the Bent and Turn of our own Minds, which way our Genius lies, and to what it is most inclin'd. I see no reason why there may not be as great a Variety in Minds, as there is in Faces; that the Soul as well as the Body may not have something in it to distinguish it, not only from all other intelligent Natures, but even from those of its own kind. There are different Proportions in Faces, which recommend them to some Eyes sooner than to others; and tho' all Truth is amiable to a reasonable Mind, and proper to employ it, yet why may there not be some particular Truths more agreeable to each individual Understanding than others are? Variety gives Beauty to the material World, and why not to the intellectual? We can discern the different Abilities which the wise Author of all things has endow'd us with; the different Circumstances in which he has plac'd us, in reference to this World, and  
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the Concerns of an Animal Life, that some may be continually useful; and that since each single Person is too limited and confin'd to attend to many, much less to all things, we may receive from each other a reciprocal Advantage; and why may we not think he has done the same with respect to truth? that since it is too much for one, our united Strength shou'd be employ'd in the Search of her. Especially since the divine Being, who contains in himself all Reality and Truth, is infinite in Perfection, and therefore should be infinitely ador'd and lov'd. And if Creatures are by their Being so incapable of rendering to their Incomprehensible Creator an Adoration and Love that is worthy of him, it is but decorous that they should however do as much as they can. All that Variety of sublime Truths, of beautiful and wondrous Objects which surround us, are nothing else but a various display of his unbounded Excellencies, and why shou'd any of them pass unobserv'd? why should not every individual Understanding be in a more especial Manner fitted for, and employ'd in the Disquisition of some particular Truth and Beauty? 'Tis true, after our re-searches, we can no more sufficiently know God, than we can worthily love him; and are as much unable to find out all his Works, as we are his Nature. Yet this shou'd only prompt us to exert all our Powers, and to do our best, since even that were too little, could we possibly do more. We can never offer to him so much Praise as he deserves; and therefore 'tis but fit he should have all that Mankind can possibly render him. He is indeed immutable in his own Nature, but those Discoveries we daily make of his Operations, will always afford us somewhat new and surprizing; for this all-glorious Sun, the Author of Life and Light, is as inexhaustible a Source of Truth, as he is of Joy and Happiness.

If then we are convinc'd that there is some peculiar Task allotted us, our next Business will be to inquire what it is. To know our own Strength, and neither to

over nor under-rate ourselves, is one of the most material Points of Wisdom, and which indeed we are most commonly ignorant of, else we should not reach at all, how unable soever we are to attain it, nor make so many successful Attempts, and be forced to come off with that pitiful Apology, *I was mistaken, I did not think it.* But we can scarce duly estimate our Understandings, 'till we have regulated our Wills, reform'd Self-love, and a Train of unmortify'd Passions, which engage us in a frequent Error and aptness to lessen the human Mind, to detract from its Grandeur, and abridge its Powers, when we consider it in general, and as great a Forwardness when we look on ourselves, to extend our Abilities beyond their Bounds. Are we conscious of a Defect? the Shallowness of human Reason at large must bear the Blame. We harangue very excellently on the Ignorance and Vanity of Mankind, and it were well if we rested here, and would forbear to murmur even at our Creator himself for allowing us so scanty a Portion. But if Reason has shone out, dispelling those Clouds which eclips'd the bright Face of Truth, we arrogate all to ourselves. My Discovery, my Hypothesis, the Strength and Clearness of my Reasonings, rather than the Truth, are what we would expose to View; 'tis that we idolize ourselves, and would have every one admire and celebrate. And yet all this is no more, perhaps, than another has done before us, or at least might have done with our Opportunities and Advantages. The Reverse of this Procedure would become us better; and it were more glorious, as well as more just, to ascribe the Excellencies of the Mind to human Nature in the Lump, and to take the Weaknesses to ourselves. By this we shou'd both avoid Sloth, the best use we can make of our Ignorance and Infirmary being first to be humbled for, and then sedulously to endeavour their Amendment, and also secure our Industry from the Mixtures of Pride and Envy; by looking on our own Acquisitions as a general Treasure, in which the whole have a Right,

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we should pretend to no more than a Share ; and considering ourselves as Parts of the same Whole, we shou'd expect to find our own Account in the improvement of every Part of it ; which would restrain us from being puffed up with the Contemplation of our own, and from repining at our Neighbours Excellencies. For let Reason shine forth where it may, as we cannot engross, so neither can we be excluded from sharing in the Benefit unless we wilfully exclude ourselves ; every one being the better for true Worth and good Sense, except the little Souls that envy them.

To help us to the Knowledge of our own Capacities, the Informations of our Friends, nay even of our Enemies, may be useful. The former, if wise and true, will direct us to the same Course to which our Genius points, and the latter will industriously endeavour to divert us from it. We cannot be too careful, that those do not disguise themselves under the specious Appearance of the former, to do us an ill Turn the more effectually. For it is not seldom seen, that such as pretend great Concern for us, will press on us such Studies, or ways of Living, as inwardly they know we are unfit for, to gratify thereby their secret Envy, diverting us from that to which our own Genius disposes us, and in which therefore they have reason to suppose we wou'd be excellent. But tho' we may make use of the Opinions of both, yet if we will be sincere and ingenuous, we cannot have a more faithful Director than our own Heart. He who gave us these Dispositions, will excite us to the Use and Improvement of them, and, unless we drive him from us by our Impurity, or thro' Negligence and want of Attention, let slip his secret Whispers, this Master within us will lay most in our View such Lessons as he wou'd have us take. Our Care then must be, to open our Eyes to that Beam of Light, which does in a more especial manner break in upon us ; to fix steadily, and to examine accurately, those Notions which are most lively represented to us, and to lay out our Thoughts and

Time in the Cultivation of them. It may be our Humour will not be gratify'd, nor our Interest serv'd by such a Method. Other Business or Amusements put on a finer Garb, and come attended with more Charms and Grandeur; these recommend us to the World, make us belov'd and illustrious in it: Whilst the Followers of Truth are despis'd and look'd askew on, as fantastical Speculatists, unsociable Thinkers, who pretend to see farther than their Neighbours, to rectify what Custom has establish'd; and are so unmannerly, as to think and talk out of the common way. He who speaks Truth makes a Satire upon the greatest Part of Mankind, and they are not over-apt to forgive him. Their Gall is touch'd proportionably as their Wounds are more deeply search'd into, tho' it be only in order to a Cure. They therefore who love Truth, shall be hated by the most; who, tho' they openly pretend to Honour, yet secretly malign her, because she reproaches them. And as a plausible Life is not often a very religious one, which made the best Judge pronounce a Woe on those of whom all Men should speak well, so neither is the most just and illuminated Understanding, the most admired and trusted to; but a plausible Speaker, as well as a plausible Liver, commonly has the Applause of the World. If then we consult our Passions and Vanity, we shall go near to determine amiss, and make that use of our Intellectuals, which Fancy or Interest pushes us on to, not which Nature has fitted us for. Hence it is, that those who might have done very well in some Studies and Employments, make but bungling Work when they apply themselves to others. We go on apace, when the Wind and Tide are on our side, but it costs us much Labour, and we make little speed, when we row against both.

As a due Consideration of our particular Capacity would put us right in our Studies, so would it keep us from clashing with our Neighbours, whom we often contend with,

with, not so much out of love to Truth, as thro' a humour of Contradiction, or because we think it the best way to shew our Parts, and by this trial of Skill to exalt ourselves above them. If, instead of disputing and laughing with them, of bending all the force of our Wit, to contradict and oppose those Advances which they make, we wou'd well understand, duly employ, and kindly communicate our peculiar Talent, how much more Service might we do our Lord? how much more useful might we be to one another? We shou'd be restrain'd from aspiring to things above our Reach, and not abuse those good Parts which were given us for common Benefit, to the Destruction of ourselves and others.

Because they who need Amendment most, are commonly least dispos'd to make such Reflexions as are necessary to procure it, we will consider a little for them, and observe the most usual Defects of the thinking Faculty.

If we are of their Opinion who say, the Understanding is only passive, and that Judgment belongs to the Will, I see not any Defect the former can have, besides Narrowness, and a Disability to extend itself to many things, which is indeed incident to all Creatures; the brightest Intelligence in the highest Order of Angels is then defective, as well as the meanest Mortal, tho' in a less degree. Nor ought it to be complain'd of, since 'tis natural and necessary; we may as well desire to be Gods, as desire to know all things. Some sort of Ignorance, therefore, or Non-perception, we cannot help. A finite Mind, suppose it as large as you please, can never extend itself to infinite Truths.

But no doubt it is in our Power, to remedy a great deal more than we do, and probably a larger Range is allow'd us, than the most active and lively Understanding has hitherto reach'd. Ignorance then cannot be avoided, but Error may; we cannot judge of things of which we have no Idea, but we can suspend our Judgment about those of which we have, tho' Clearness and

Evidence oblige us to pass it. Indeed, in strictness of Speech, the Will, and not the Understanding, is blameable when we think amiss, since the latter opposes not the Ends for which God made it, but readily extends itself as far as it can, receiving such Impressions as are made on it. 'Tis the former which directs it to such Objects, that fills up its Capacity with such Ideas, as are foreign to its Business, and of no use to it, or which does not at least oppose the incursions of material Things, and deface, as much as it is able, those Impressions which sensible Objects leave in the Imagination.

They who apply themselves to the contemplation of Truth, will perhaps at first find a Contraction, or emptiness of Thought, and that their Mind offers nothing on the Subject they wou'd consider, is not ready at unfolding, nor in representing correspondent Ideas to be compar'd with it, is, as it were, asleep, or in a Dream, and tho' not empty of all Thought, yet thinks nothing clearly or to the purpose. The primary Cause of this, is that Limitation which all created Minds are subject to, which Limitation appears more visible in some than in others, either because some Minds are endow'd by their Creator with a larger Capacity than the rest; or if you are not inclin'd to think so, then by reason of the bodily Indisposition of the Organs, which cramps and contracts the Operations of the Mind. That Person whose Capacity of receiving Ideas is very little; whose Ideas are disorder'd, and not capable of being so dispos'd as that they may be compar'd, in order to the forming of a Judgment, is a Fool, or little better. If we find this to be our Case, and that after frequent Trials there appears no hopes of Amendment, 'tis best to desist, we shall but lose our Labour, we may do some good in an active Life, and Employments that depend on the Body, but we are altogether unfit for Contemplation, and the exercises of the Mind. Yet before we give out, let us see whether it be thus with us in all Cases: Can we think and argue rationally about a Dress, an Intrigue, an

an Estate? Why then not upon better Subjects? The way of considering and meditating justly, is the same on all Occasions. 'Tis true, there will fewest Ideas rise, when we would meditate on such Subjects as we have been least conversant with; but this is a Fault which it is in our Power to remedy, first by Reading or Discourfing, and then by frequent and serious Meditation.

As those we have been speaking of are hinder'd in their Search after Truth, thro' a want of Ideas, so there are another sort, who are not happy in their Enquiries, on account of the Multitude and Impetuosity of theirs. Volatileness of Thought, very pernicious to true Science, is a Fault, which People of warm Imaginations and active Spirits are apt to fall into. Such a Temper is readily dispos'd to receive Errors, and very well qualify'd to propagate them, especially if a volubility of Speech be join'd to it. These, thro' an immoderate nimbleness of Thinking, skip from one Idea to another, without observing due Order and Connexion. They content themselves with a superficial View, a random Glance, and depending on the vigour of their Imagination, are taken with Appearance, never tarrying to penetrate the Subject, or to find out Truth, if she floats not upon the Surface. A multitude of Ideas, not relating to the Matter they design to think of, rush in upon them, and their easy Mind entertains all Comers, how impertinent soever: Instead of examining the Question in debate, they are got into the Clouds, numbering the Cities in the Moon, and building airy Castles there. Nor is it easy to cure this Defect, since it deceives others, as well as those that have it, with a shew of Ingenuity. The vivacity of such Persons makes their Conversation plausible with those that consider not much, tho' not with the Judicious. It procures for them the character of a Wit, but hinders them from being wise: For Truth is not often found by such as will not take time to examine her Counterfeits, to distinguish between Evidence and Probability, Realities and Appearances, but who

thro' a conceit of their own Sharp-sightedness, think they can pierce to the bottom with the first Glance.

To cure this Distemper perfectly, it will be necessary to apply to the Body, as well as to the Mind. The animal Spirits must be lessen'd, or render'd more calm and manageable, at least they must not be unnaturally and violently mov'd by such a Diet, or such Passions, Designs, and Divertisements, as are likely to put them in a Ferment: Contemplation requires a governable Body, a sedate and steady Mind; and the Body and the Mind do reciprocally influence each other, that we can scarce keep the one in tune if the other be out. We can neither observe the Errors of our Intellect, nor the Irregularity of our Morals, while we are darken'd by Fumes, agitated with unruly Passions or carry'd away with eager Desires after sensible Things and Vanities. We must, therefore, withdraw our Minds from the World, from adhering to the Senses, from the love of material Beings, of Poms and Gaieties; for 'tis these that usually steal away the Heart, that seduce the Mind to such unaccountable Wanderings, and so fill up its Capacity, that they leave no room for Truth, so distract its Attention, that it cannot enquire after her. For tho' the Body does partly occasion this Fault, yet the Will, no doubt, may in good measure remedy it, by using its Authority to fix the Understanding on such Objects as it would have contemplated; it has a Rein which will certainly curb this wandering, if it can but be persuaded to make use of it. Indeed Attention and deep Meditation are not so agreeable to our animal Nature, do not flatter our Pride so well as this agreeable *Reverie*, which gives us a pretence to Knowledge, without taking much Pains to acquire it, and does not choke us with the humbling Thoughts of our own Ignorance, with which we must make such ado before it can be enlighten'd: Yet without Attention and strict Examination, we are liable to false Judgments on every Occasion, to Vanity and Arrogance, to impertinent prating of things we do not understand; are  
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kept from making a Progress, because we fancy ourselves to be at the top already, and can never attain to true Wisdom. If for the future then we wou'd think to purpose, we must suffer ourselves to be convinc'd, how oft we have already thought to none, suspect our Quickness, and not give our desultory Imagination leave to ramble.

That we may the better restrain it, let us consider, what a loss of Time and Study such irregular and useless Thoughts occasion, what a Reproach they are to our Reason, how they cheat us with a shew of Knowledge, which, so long as we are under the power of this giddy Temper, will inevitably escape us. And if to this we add a serious perusal of such Books as are not loosely writ, but require an attentive and awaken'd Mind to apprehend and to take in the whole Force of them, obliging ourselves to understand them thoroughly, so as to be able to give a just Account of them to ourselves, or rather to some other Person, intelligent enough to take it, and correct our Mistakes ; 'tis to be hop'd we shall obtain a due poise of Mind, and be able to direct our Thoughts to the thorough Discussion of such Objects as we wou'd examine. Such Books, I mean, as are fuller of Matter than Words, which diffuse a Light thro' every part of the Subject treated of, do not skim, but penetrate to the bottom ; yet so as leave somewhat to be wrought out by the Reader's own Meditation ; such as are writ with Order and Connexion, the Strength of whose Arguments cannot be sufficiently felt, unless we remember and compare the whole System.

Volatileness of Thought occasions Rashness and Precipitation in our Judgments, and too great a Conceit of ourselves : All the Irregularities of our Will proceed from these false Judgments, thro' want of Consideration, or a partial Examination when we do consider. For did we consider with any manner of Attention, we could not be so absurd as to call Evil Good, and choose it as such, or prefer a less Good before a greater, a poor momentary Trifle, before the Purity and Perfection of our  
Mind.

Mind. We seek no farther than the first appearance of Truth and Good: Here we stop, allowing neither Time nor Thought to search to the bottom, and to pull off those Disguises which impose on us. This Precipitation is what gives Birth to all our Errors, which are nothing else but a hasty and injudicious Sentence, a mistaking one thing for another, supposing an Agreement or Disparity among Ideas and their Relations, where in reality there is none, occasion'd by an imperfect and cursory View of them. And tho' there are other things which may be said to lead us into Error, yet they do it only as they lead us into rash and precipitate Judgments. We love Grandeur, and every thing that feeds our good Opinion of ourselves, and therefore wou'd judge off-hand, because we suppose it a Disparagement to our Understandings to be long in examining; so that we greedily embrace whatever seems to carry Evidence enough for a speedy Determination, how slight and superficial soever it be; whereas did we calmly and deliberately examine our Evidence, and how far those Motives we are acted by ought to influence, we should not be liable to this Seduction: For by this means the Impetuosity of a warm Imagination wou'd be cool'd, and the Extravagancies of a disorderly one regulated. We shou'd not be deceiv'd by the report of our Senses, the prejudices of Education, our own private Interest and Readiness to receive the Opinions, whether true or false, of those we love, or wou'd appear to love, because we think they will serve us in that Interest. Our inordinate Thirst after a great Reputation, or the Power and Riches, the Grandeurs and Pleasures of this World, wou'd no longer dissipate our Thoughts and distract our Attention, for we shou'd be then sensible how little Concern is due to them.

Whatever false Principle we embrace, whatever wrong Conclusion we draw from true ones, is a Disparagement to our thinking Power, a Weakness of Judgment proceeding from a confus'd and imperfect view  
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of Things, as that does for want of Attention, and a hasty and impartial Examination. It were endless to reckon up all the false Maxims and Reasonings we fall into; the general Causes have been already mention'd, the Particulars are as many as those several Compositions which arise from the various mixtures of the Passions, Interests, Education, Conversation and Reading, &c. of particular Persons. The best way I can think of to improve the Understanding, and to guard it against all Error, whatever Cause they proceed from, is to regulate the Will, whose Office it is to determine the Understanding to such and such Ideas, and to stay it in the Consideration of them so long, as is necessary to the discovery of Truth; for if the Will be right, the Understanding cannot be guilty of any palpable Errors. We shou'd not judge of any thing which we do not apprehend; we should suspend our Assent, till we see just cause to give it, and determine nothing, till the Strength and Clearness of the Evidence oblige us to it. We should withdraw ourselves, as much as may be, from corporeal things, that pure Reason may be heard the better. We shou'd make that use of our Senses, for which we were designed and fitted, the preservation of the Body, but not depend on their Testimony in our enquiries after Truth. We shou'd particularly divest ourselves of mistaken Self-love, little Ends, and mean Designs, and keep our Inclinations and Passions under Government. We shou'd not engage ourselves so far in any Party or Opinion, as to make it in a manner necessary that that shou'd be right, lest from wishing, we come at last to persuade ourselves it is so. We shou'd be passionately in love with Truth, as being thoroughly sensible of her Excellency and Beauty. We shou'd embrace her, how opposite soever she may sometimes be to our Humours and Designs, we should labour to bring these over to her, and never attempt to make her truckle to them. We shou'd be so far from disliking a Truth because it touches us home, and lays open our tendere

derest and dearest Corruption, that we should rather prize it the more, by how much the more plainly it shews us our Errors and Miscarriages. These are the Truths it concerns us most to know: It is not material to us what other Peoples Opinions are, any farther than as the knowledge of their Sentiments may correct our Mistakes: And the higher our Station is in the World, so much the greater need have we to be curious in this Particular.

The Mean and Inconsiderable often stumble on Truth, when they seek not after her; but she is commonly kept out of the way, and industriously conceal'd from the Great and Mighty, either out of Design or Envy; for whoever wou'd make a Property of another, must by all means conceal the Truth from him, and they who envy their Neighbour's Preeminence in other things, are willing themselves to excel in exactness of Judgment, which they think, and very truly, to be the greatest Excellency. To help forward this Deception, the Great, instead of being industrious in finding out the Truth, are generally very impatient when they meet with her. She does not treat them so tenderly and familiarly as their Flatterers do. There is in her that which us'd to be the character of our Nation, an honest Plainness and Sincerity, Openness and blunt Familiarity. She cannot mold herself into all Shapes to be render'd agreeable, but, standing on her native Worth, is regardless of Outside and Varnish.

As to the method of thinking, we shall not send you farther than your own Minds to learn it. You may, if you please, take in the assistance of some well-chosen Book, but a good natural Reason, after all, is the best Director: Without this, you will scarce argue well, tho' you had the choicest Books and Tutors to instruct you; but with it you may, tho' you happen to be destitute of the other: For, as the judicious Author of *The Art of Thinking* well observes, *Those Operations of the Mind proceed merely from Nature, and that sometimes*  
*more*

*more perfectly from those who are altogether ignorant of Logick, than from those who have learned it.*

That which we propose in all our Meditations and Reasonings, is either to deduce some Truth we are in Search of, from such Principles as we are already acquainted with, or else to dispose our Thoughts and Reasonings in such a manner, as to be able to convince others of those Truths which we ourselves are convinc'd of. Other Designs, indeed, Men may have, such as the maintenance of their own Opinions, Actions, and Parties, without regard either to the Truth and Justice of them, or to the great hurt they may do by imposing on their simple and unwary Neighbours; but these are mean and base ones, beneath a Man, much more a Christian, who is, or ought to be, endowed with greater Integrity and Ingenuity.

Now Reasoning being nothing else but a comparison of Ideas, and a deducing of Conclusions from clear and evident Principles, it is in the first place requisite, that our Ideas be clear and just, and our Principles true, else all our Discourse will be Nonsense and Absurdity, Falshood and Error. That our Ideas may be right, we have no more to do but to look into our own Minds, having, as was said above, laid aside all Prejudices, and whatever may give a false Tincture to our Light; there we shall find a clear and lively Representation of what we seek for, unsophisticated with the dross of false Definitions and unintelligible Expressions. But we must not imagine that a transient View will serve the Turn, or that our Eye will be enlighten'd if it be not fix'd: For tho' Truth be exceeding bright, yet since our Prejudices and Passions have darken'd our Eye-sight, it requires no little pains and application of Mind to find her out; the neglect of which Application is the reason that we have so little Truth, and that the little we have is almost lost in that rubbish of Error which is mingled with it. Since Truth is so near at hand, since we are not oblig'd to tumble over many Authors, to hunt after every celebrated

brated Genius, but may have it by inquiring after it in our own Breasts, are we not inexcusable if we do not obtain it? Are we not unworthy of Compassion if we suffer our Understandings to be over-run with Error? Indeed it seems most reasonable and most agreeable to the Wisdom and Equity of the Divine Operations, that every one shou'd have a Teacher in his own Bosom, who will, if they seriously apply themselves to him, immediately enlighten them so far as is necessary, and direct them to such Means as are sufficient for their Instruction, both in human and divine Truths: For, as to the latter, Reason, if it be right and solid, will not pretend to be our sole Instructor, but will send us to divine Revelation when it may be had.

God does nothing in vain: He gives no Power or Faculty which he has not allotted to some proportionate Use; and therefore if he has given to Mankind a rational Mind, every individual Understanding ought to be employed in somewhat worthy of it. The meanest Person shou'd think as justly, tho' not as copiously as the greatest Philosopher. And if the Understanding be made for the contemplation of Truth, (and I know not what else it can be made for) either there are many Understandings who are never able to attain what they were design'd and fitted for, which is contrary to the supposition that God made nothing in vain, or else the very meanest must be put in a way of attaining it. Now how can this be, if all that goes to the Composition of a knowing Man in the account of the World, be necessary to make one so? All have not leisure to learn Languages, and pore on Books, nor opportunity to converse with the Learned: But all may *think*, may use their own Faculties rightly, and consult the Master who is within them.

By Ideas we sometimes understand in general all that which is the immediate object of the Mind, whatever it perceives; and in this large Sense it may take in all Thought, all that we are any ways capable of discerning: So when we say we have no Idea of a Thing,

'tis as much as to say we know nothing of the Matter. Again, it is more strictly taken for that which represents to the Mind some Object distinct from it, whether clearly or confusedly: When this is its Import, our Knowledge is said to be as clear as our Ideas are: For that Idea which represents a Thing so clearly, that by an attent and simple View we may discern its Properties and Modifications, at least so far as they can be known, is never false. All our Certainty and Evidence depend upon it; if we know not truly what is thus represented to our Minds, we know nothing. Thus the Idea of Equality between two and two is so evident, that it is impossible to doubt of it; no Argument cou'd convince us of the contrary, nor be able to persuade us the same may be found between two and three.

And as such an Idea as this is never false, so neither can any Idea be said to be so, if by false we mean that which has no Existence. Our idea certainly exists, tho' there be not any thing in Nature correspondent to it: For tho' there be no such thing as a golden Mountain, yet when I think of one, 'tis certain I have an Idea of it.

Our Ideas are then said to be false, or rather wrong, when they have no Conformity to the real Nature of the thing whose Name they bear. So that properly speaking, it is not the Idea, but the Judgment that is false. We err in supposing that our Idea is answerable to something without us, when it is not. In simple Perceptions we are not often deceiv'd, but we frequently mistake in compounding them, by uniting several things which have no Agreement, and separating others which are essentially united: Indeed it may happen, that our Perceptions are faulty sometimes, thro' the indisposition of the Organs or Faculties. Thus a Man who has the Jaundice, sees every thing ting'd with yellow; yet even here the Error is not in the simple Idea, but in the compound one; for we do not mistake when we say the Object appears yellow to our Sight, tho' we do,

do, when we affirm that it does, or ought to do so to others. So again, when the Mind does not sufficiently attend to her Ideas, nor examine them on all sides, 'tis very likely she will think amiss; but this also is a false Judgment, that which is amiss in the Perception being rather Inadequateness than Falseness. Thus, in many Cases, we enquire no farther than whether an Action be not directly forbidden, and if we do not find it absolutely unlawful, we think that sufficient to authorize the practice of it, not considering it as we ought to do, cloth'd with the circumstances of Scandal, Temptation, &c. which place it in the same Classes with things unlawful, at least make it so to us.

Rational Creatures shou'd endeavour to have right Ideas of every thing that comes under their Cognisance, but yet our Ideas of Morality, our Thoughts about Religion are those which we shou'd with greatest Speed and Diligence rectify, because they are most important; the Life to come, as well as the Occurrences of this, depending on them. We shou'd search for Truth in our most abstracted Speculations, but it concerns us nearly to follow her close in what relates to the conduct of our Lives: For the main thing we are to drive at in all our Studies, and that which is the greatest Improvement of our Understandings, is the art of Prudence, the being all of a piece, managing all our Words and Actions as it becomes wise Persons, and good Christians.

Yet in this we are commonly most faulty; for besides the deceits of our Passions, our Ideas of particular Virtues and Vices, Goods and Evils, being an assemblage of divers simple Perceptions, and including several Judgments, are therefore liable to mistake, and much more so, considering how we commonly come by them. We hear the Word that stands for such a thing, suppose Honour: and then instead of inquiring what it is at the Fountain-Head; how defin'd in the Oracles of God, what our own Reason tells us of it, or what it is in the impartial Judgment of the wisest and the best; Custom  
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and the Observations we make on the Practice of such as pretend to Honour, form our Idea, which is seldom a right one, the Opinions and Practices of the World being very fallacious, and many times quite opposite to the Dictates of Truth and Reason. For what a strange distorted Idea of Honour must they needs have, who can think it honourable to break a Vow that ought to be kept, and dishonourable to get loose from an Engagement that ought to be broken? who cannot bear to be tax'd with a Lie, and yet never think fit to keep their Word? What do they think of Greatness, who support their Pomp at the Expence of the Groans and Tears of many injur'd Families? What is their Idea of Heaven, who profess to believe such a thing, and yet never endeavour to qualify themselves for the Enjoyment of it? Have they any Idea at all of these things when they speak of them? or if they have, is it not a very false one?

Now that we may avoid Mistakes the better, and because we usually join Words to our Ideas, even when we only meditate, we should free them from all Equivocation, not make use of any Word which has not a distinct Idea annex'd to it; and where Custom has join'd many Ideas to one Word, carefully separate and distinguish them. For if our Words be equivocal, how can we, by pronouncing such and such, excite the same Idea in another that is in our own Mind, which is the end of Speech; and consequently how can we be understood if sometimes we annex one Idea to a Word, and sometimes another? We may for ever wrangle with those, who perhaps would be found to agree with us if we understood each other, but we can neither convince them, nor clear up the Matter to our own Mind. For Instance, shou'd I dispute whether Evil were to be chosen? without defining what I mean by Evil, which is a Word customarily apply'd to Things of different Natures, and should conclude in the affirmative; meaning at the same time the Evil of Pains, or any Corporal Loss or Punishment;

ment; I were not mistaken; tho' another Person who annexes no other Idea but that of Sin to the Word Evil, might justly contradict me, and say that I was. Or if in the process of my Discourse, I should, without giving notice of it, substitute the Idea of Sin instead of that of Pain, when I mention Evil, I shou'd argue falsely; for tho' it is a Maxim that we may choose a less Evil, to avoid a greater, if both of them be corporal Evils, yet if only one of them be so, we shou'd not choose it to avoid a Sin, between which, and the Evil of Pain, there is no Comparison: But if the two Evils propos'd to our Choice be both of them sinful, that Principle will not hold, we must choose neither, whatever comes of it, Sin being eligible no manner of way.

Thus are our Ideas often thought to be false, when the Fault is really in our Language; we make use of Words without joining any, or only loose and indeterminate Ideas to them, prating like Parrots, who can modify Sounds, pronounce Syllables, and sometimes marshal them as a Man wou'd, tho' without the Use of Reason, or understanding any thing by them. Thus, after a long Discourse, and many fine Words, our Hearer may justly ask us, what we have been saying? and what it is we would be at? And so a great part of the good Breeding of the World, many elegant Compliments pass for nothing; they have no Meaning, or if they have, 'tis quite contrary to what the Words in other Cases signify.

From the Comparison of two or more Ideas clearly conceiv'd, arises a Judgment, which we may lay down for a Principle, and as we have occasion, argue from it: Always observing, that those Judgments which we take for Axioms and Principles, be such as carry the highest Evidence and Conviction, such as every one who will but in the least attend, may clearly see, and be fully convinc'd of, and which need no other Idea for their Demonstration. Thus from the Agreement which we plainly perceive between the Ideas of God, and of Goodness,  
singly

singly consider'd, we discern, that they may be join'd together, so as to form this Proposition, *That God is Good*: And from the evident Disparity that is between God and Injustice, we learn to affirm this other, *That he is not Unjust*. And so long as we judge of nothing but what we see clearly, we cannot be mistaken in our Judgments, we may indeed in those Reasonings and Deductions we draw from them, if we are ignorant of the Laws of Argumentation, or negligent in the Observation of them.

The first and principal Thing, therefore, to be observ'd in all the Operations of the Mind is, that we determine nothing about those things of which we have not a clear Idea, and as distinct as the Nature of the Subject will permit; for we cannot properly be said to know any thing which does not clearly and evidently appear to us. Whatever we see distinctly, we likewise see clearly, Distinction always including Clearness, tho' Clearness does not necessarily include Distinction, there being many Objects clear to the View of the Mind, which yet cannot be said to be distinct. We may have a clear, but not a distinct and perfect Idea of God and our own Souls; their Existence and some of their Properties and Attributes may be certainly and indubitably known; but we cannot know the Nature of our Souls distinctly, and less that of God, because his is infinite. Now where our Knowledge is distinct, we may boldly deny of a Subject, all that which after a careful Examination we find not in it: But where our Knowledge is only clear, and not distinct, tho' we may safely affirm what we see; yet we cannot, without a hardy Presumption, deny of it what we see not.

As Judgments are form'd by the comparing of Ideas, so Reasoning or Discourse arises from the Comparison or Combination of several Judgments. Nature teaches us, when we cannot find out what Relation one Idea bears to another by a simple View, or bare Comparison to seek for a common Measure, or third Idea, which,  
relating

relating to the other two, we may, by comparing it with each of them, discern wherein they agree or differ. Our Invention discovers itself in proposing readily apt Ideas for this middle Term; our Judgment in making choice of such as are clearest and most to our Purpose, and the Excellency of our Reasoning consists in our Skill and Dexterity in applying them.

Invention indeed is the hardest Part; when Proofs are found, it is not very difficult to manage them: And to know precisely wherein their Nature consists, may help us somewhat in our Enquiries after them. An intermediate Idea then, which can make out an Agreement between other Ideas, must be equivalent to, and yet distinct from, those we compare by it. Where Ideas agree, it will not be hard to find such an Equivalent, and if, after diligent Search, we cannot meet with any, 'tis a pretty sure Sign that they do not agree. It is not indeed necessary that our middle Idea be equivalent in all Respects; 'tis enough if it be in such as make the Comparison: And when it is so to one of the compound Ideas, but not to the other, that is a Proof that they do not agree among themselves.

All the Commerce and Intercourse of the World is manag'd by equivalent Conversation, as well as Traffick. Why do we trust our Friends, but because their Truth and Honesty appear to us equivalent to the Confidence we repose in them? Why do we perform good Offices to others, but because there is a Proportion between them and the Merit of the Person, or our own Circumstances? And as the way to know the Worth of things, is to compare them with one another, so in like manner we come to the Knowledge of the Truth of them by an equal Balancing.

But because Examples are more familiar than Precepts, as condescending to shew us the very manner of practising them, I shall endeavour to make the Matter in hand as plain as I can, by subjoining Instances to the following Rules.

We

We have heard already that a Medium is necessary, when we cannot discern the Relation that is between two or more Ideas, by Intuition or simple View. Cou'd this alone procure us what we seek after, the Addition of other Ideas would be needless; since to make a Shew of Wit, by tedious Arguings and unnecessary Flourishes, does only perplex and incumber the Matter, Intuition being the simplest, and on that account the best way of knowing.

Rule I. *Acquaint yourselves thoroughly with the State of the Question; have a distinct Notion of your Object, whatever it be, and of the Terms you make use of, knowing precisely what it is you drive at.*

Rule II. *Cut off all needless Ideas, and whatever has not a necessary Connexion to the Matter under Consideration; which serve only to fill up the Capacity of the Mind, and to divide and distract the Attention.* From the Neglect of this come those causeless Digressions, tedious Parentheses, and impertinent Remarks, which we meet with in some Authors: For, as when our Sight is diffus'd and extended to many Objects at once, we see none of them distinctly; so when the Mind grasps at every Idea that presents itself, or rambles after such as relate not to its present Business, it loses its Hold, and retains a very feeble Apprehension of that which it shou'd attend. Some have added another Rule, *That we reason only on those Things of which we have clear Ideas.* But that is a Consequence of the first; for we can by no means understand our Subject, or be well acquainted with the State of the Question, unless we have a clear Idea of all its Terms.

Rule III. *Conduct your Thoughts by Order; beginning with the most simple and easy Objects, and ascending, as by Degrees, to the Knowledge of the more compos'd.* Order makes every thing easy, strong, and beautiful. That Superstructure, whose Foundation is not duly laid, is not like to last or please: Nor are they likely to solve the difficult,

difficult, who have neglected or slightly past over the easy Questions.

Rule IV. *Leave no part of your Subject unexamin'd:* It being as necessary to consider all that can let in Light, as to shut out all that is foreign to it. We may stop short of Truth, as well as over-run it; and tho' we look never so attentively on our proper Object, if we read but half of it, we may be as much mistaken, as if we extended our Sight beyond it. Some Objects agree very well when observ'd on one side, which upon turning the other shew a great Disparity. Thus the right Angle of a Triangle may be like to one part of a Square, but compare the whole, and you will find them very different Figures. A moral Action may, in some Circumstances, be not only fit but necessary, which in others, where Time, Place, and the like, have made an Alteration, wou'd be most improper; and if we venture to Act on the former Judgment, we may easily do amiss; if we wou'd act as we ought, we must view its new Face, and see with what Aspect that looks on us.

To this Rule belongs that of *dividing the Subject of our Meditations into as many parts as we can, and as shall be necessary to understand it perfectly.* This indeed is most necessary in difficult Questions, which will scarce be unravell'd but in this manner by pieces; And let us take care to make exact Reviews, and to sum up our Evidence justly, before we pass Sentence and fix our Judgment.

Rule V. *Always keep your Subject directly in your Eye, and closely pursue it thro' all your Progress;* there being no better sign of a good Understanding, than thinking closely and pertinently, and reasoning dependently, so as to make the former part of our Discourse support the latter; and *this* an Illustration of *that*, carrying Light and Evidence in every Step we take. The Neglect of this Rule is the Cause, why our Discoveries of Truth are seldom exact, that so much is often said to little purpose, and many intelligent and industrious Readers,  
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when they have read over a Book, are very little wiser than when they began it. That the two last Rules may be the better observ'd, 'twill be fit very often to look over our Process, so far as we have gone, that so, by rendring our Subject familiar, we may the sooner arrive to an exact Knowledge of it.

Rule VI. *Judge no farther than you perceive, and take not any thing for Truth, which you do not evidently know to be so.* Indeed in some Cases we are forc'd to content ourselves with Probability, but 'twere well if we did so only, where 'tis plainly necessary; that is, when the Subject of our Meditation is such, as we cannot possibly have a certain Knowledge of it, because we are not furnish'd with Proofs, which have a constant and immutable Connexion with the Ideas we apply them to; or because we cannot perceive it, which is our Case in such Exigencies, as oblige us to act presently on a cursory View of the Arguments propos'd to us, where we want Time to trace them to the bottom, and to make use of such Means as would discover Truth.

I cannot think we are often driven to such Straits in any considerable Affair, tho' I believe that very many Subjects may be propos'd to us, concerning which we cannot readily pass our Judgment, either because we never consider'd them before, or because we are wanting in some Means that lead to the Knowledge of them. In which Case, Reason wills that we suspend our Judgment 'till we can be better inform'd; nor wou'd it have us remit our Search after Certainty, even in those very Cases, in which we may sometimes be forc'd to act only on probable Grounds. For Reason cannot rest satisfy'd with Probabilities where Evidence is possible; our Passions and Interests may, but that does not incline us to leave off Enquiring, lest we happen to meet somewhat contrary to our Desires. No: Reason requires us to continue our Enquiries with all the Industry we can, 'till they have put us in possession of Truth, and when we have found her, enjoins us to follow her, how opposite

soever she may cause our latter Actions to be our former. But by this we may learn, and so we may by every Thing, that such weak and fallible Creatures as we are, be sure to think candidly of those whose Opinions and Actions differ from our own; because we do not know the Necessity of their Affairs, nor in what ill Circumstances they are plac'd, in respect of Truth.

The State of the Question being distinctly known, and certain Ideas fix'd to the Terms we make use of, we shall find sometimes, that the Difference which was suppos'd to be between the Things themselves, is only in the Words, in the several ways we make use of to express the same Idea.

If, upon looking into ourselves, we discern, that these different Terms have but one and the same Idea, when we have corrected our Expressions, the Controversy is at an end, and we need inquire no farther. *Thus if we are ask'd, whether God is infinitely perfect?* there needs no intermediate Idea, to compare the Idea of God, with that of infinite Perfection, since we may discern them, on the very first View, to be one and the same Idea differently express'd; which to go about to explain or prove, were only to cumber it with needless Words, and to make what is clear, obscure: For we injure a Cause instead of defending it, by attempting an Explanation or Proof of things so clear, that as they do not need, so perhaps they are not capable of any. But if it be a Question, *Whether there is a God, or a Being infinitely perfect?* we then are to examine the Agreement between our Idea of God, and that of Existence. Now this may be discern'd by *Intuition*; for upon a View of our Ideas, we find that Existence is a Perfection, and the Foundation of all other Perfections, since that which has no Being, cannot be suppos'd to have any Perfection. And tho' the Idea of Existence is not adequate to that of Perfection, yet the Idea of Perfection includes that of Existence, and if *That* Idea were divided into Parts, one Part of it would exactly agree with *This*. If therefore  
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we will allow, that any Being is infinite in all Perfections, we cannot deny that that Being exists: Existence itself being one Perfection, and such a one as all the rest are built upon.

If unreasonable Men will farther demand, *Why is it necessary that all Perfections should be center'd in one Being? Is it not enough that it be parcell'd out among many? And tho' it be true, that that Being which is all Perfection, must needs exist, yet where is the Necessity of an all-perfect Being?* We must then look about for Proofs and intermediate Ideas, and the Objection itself will furnish us with one. For those *Many* whose particular Ideas it wou'd have join'd together, to make a Compound one of all Perfection, are no other than Creatures, as will appear if we consider our Idea of particular Being, and of Creature; which are so far from having any Thing to distinguish them, that in all Points they resemble each other. Now this Idea naturally suggests to us that of Creation, or a Power of giving Being to that, which before the exerting of that Power had none; which Idea, if we use it as a Medium, will serve to discover to us the Necessity of an all-perfect Being.

Whatever has any Perfection or Excellency, which is all we mean here by Perfection, must either have it of itself, or derive it from some other Being. Now Creatures cannot have their Perfection, because they have not their Being, from themselves; for to suppose that they made themselves, is an Absurdity too ridiculous to be seriously refuted; 'tis to suppose them to be, and not to be, at the same time, and that when they were nothing, they were able to do the greatest Matter. Nor can they derive their Being and Perfection from any other Creature: For tho' some particular Beings may seem to be the Cause of the Perfections of others, as the Watch-maker may be said to be the Cause of the regular Motions of the Watch; yet trace it a little farther, and you will find this very Cause shall need another, and so without end 'till you come to the Fountain-

head, to that all-perfect Being, who is the last Resort of our Thoughts, and in whom they naturally and necessarily terminate. If to this it be objected, that we as good as affirm that this all-perfect Being is his own Maker, by saying he is self-existent, and so we fall into the same Absurdity which we imputed to that Opinion which supposes that Creatures were their own Maker, the Reply is easy: We do not say he made himself, we only affirm that his Nature is such, that tho' we cannot sufficiently explain it, because we cannot comprehend it, yet thus much we can discern, that if he did not exist of himself, no other Being could ever have existed. Thus either all must be swallowed up in an infinite Nothing, if Nothing can properly have that Epithet; and we must suppose that neither we ourselves, nor any of those Creatures about us, ever had, or ever can have a Being; which is too ridiculous to imagine; or else we must needs have Recourse to a self-existing Being, who is the Maker and Lord of all Things. And since Self-existence must of Necessity be plac'd somewhere, is it not much more natural and reasonable to place it in infinite Perfection, than among poor frail Creatures, whose Origin we may trace, and whose End we see daily hastening?

Since there are innumerable Beings in the World, which have each of them their several Excellencies or Perfections; since these can no more derive their Perfections than their Being from themselves, or from any other Creature; since a self-existing Being is the Result of our Thoughts, the first and only true Cause, without which it is impossible that any thing should ever have existed; since Creatures with their Being receive all that depends on it, from him their Maker; since none can give what he has not, and therefore he who communicates an innumerable Variety of Perfections to his Creatures, even all that they enjoy, must needs entertain in himself all those Beauties and Perfections he is pleas'd to communicate to inferior Beings. Nothing can be more plain and evident than that there is a God,  
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and that the Existence of an all-perfect Being is absolutely necessary.

If some are better pleas'd with the usual way of *Syllogisms*, and think an Argument cannot be rightly manag'd without one, for their Satisfaction we will add another Instance.

Suppose the Question were put, Whether a *rich Man is happy*? By a rich Man, understanding one who possesses the Wealth and good things of this World, and by happy, the Enjoyment of the proper Good of Man; we compare the two Terms Riches and Happiness together, to discern if they be so much one and the same, that what is affirm'd of the one may be said of the other; but we find they are not. For if Riches and Happiness were Terms convertible, then all who are happy must be rich, and all who are rich must be happy. To affirm the last of which, is to beg the Question, and the contrary appears by the following Argument, which makes use of *Satisfaction with one's own Condition* for the middle Idea, or common Measure.

He who is happy is satisfy'd with his Condition, and free from anxious Cares and Solitude; for these proceeding from the want of Good, he who enjoys his proper Good cannot be subject to them. But riches do not free us from Anxieties and Solitude, they many times increase them; therefore to be rich and to be happy are not one and the same thing.

Again, If there are some who are happy, and yet not rich, then Riches and Happiness are two distinct things. But a good poor Man is happy in the Enjoyment of God, who is better to him than thousands of Gold and Silver; there Riches and Happiness are to be distinguish'd, and we cannot affirm a Man is happy because he is rich, neither can we deny it. Riches, consider'd absolutely in themselves, neither make a Man happy, nor hinder him from being so: They contribute to his Happiness, or they obstruct it, according to the Use he makes of them.

As for the common Rules of *Disputation*, they more frequently entangle than clear a Question ; nor is it worth while to know any more of them than may help to guard us from the Sophistry of those that use them, and assist us in the managing of an Argument fairly, so long as it is tenable, and 'till we are driven from it by the mere Dint of Truth. To be able to hold an Argument right or wrong, may pass with some, perhaps, for the Character of a good Disputant, but must by no means be allow'd to be that of a rational Person : It belongs to such to detect, as soon as may be, the Fallacies of an ill one, and to establish Truth with the clearest Evidence. For indeed Truth, not Victory, is what we should contend for in all Disputes, it being more glorious to be overcome by her, than to triumph under the Banner of Error. And therefore we pervert our Reason, when we make it the Instrument of an endless Contention, by seeking after Quirks and Subtleties, abusing equivocal Terms, and by practising the rest of those little Arts every Sophister is full of, which are of no Service in the Discovery of Truth ; all they can do is to ward off an Opponent's Blow, to make a Noise, and raise a Dust, that so we may escape in the Hurry, our Foil being undiscover'd.

It were endless to reckon up all the Fallacies we put on ourselves, and endeavour to obtrude on others. On ourselves in the first place ; for however we may be pleas'd in the Contemplation of our own Craft, or (to use those softer Names we are apt to give it) our Acuteness and Ingenuity ; whoever attempts to impose on others, is first impos'd on himself : he is cheated by some of those grand Deceivers, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and made to believe that Vain-glory, secular Interest, Ambition, or perhaps Sensuality or Revenge, or any the like contemptible Appetites, are preferable to Integrity and Truth.

It is to little Purpose to guard ourselves against the Sophisms of the Head, if we lie open to those of the Heart. One irregular Passion will put a greater Obstacle between

us and Truth, than the brightest Understanding and clearest Reasoning can easily remove. This every one of us is apt to discern in others, but we are blind to it in ourselves. We can readily say that it is Pride or Obstinacy, Interest or Passion, or in a word, Self-love, that keeps our Neighbour from Conviction, but all this while imagine our own Hearts are very clear of them; tho' more impartial Judges are of another Mind.

I wish there were no reason to think, that there are some who attempt to maintain an Opinion which they know to be false, or at least which they have cause to suspect; and therefore industriously avoid what would manifest their Error. 'Tis hop'd however, that the greatest part of the Disputers of the World are not of this Number, and that the Reason why they offer their Neighbours sophistical Arguments, is, because they were not aware that they are in the wrong, but are rather persuaded that they are acted only by a Zeal for God, an honest Constancy and stanch Integrity; tho' at the very same time quite different Motives move them under these Appearances.

And indeed he must be an extraordinary good Man, a Wonder scarce produc'd in an Age, who has no irregular Passion stirring, who receives no manner of Tincture from Pride and vicious Self-love, to which all are so prone, and which hide themselves under so many Disguises. Who is got above the World, its Terrors and Allurements, has laid up his Treasure in Heaven, and is fully contented with his present Circumstances, let them be what they will, having made them the Boundaries of his Desires? Who knows how to live on a little very happily, and therefore receives no Bias from his own Conveniency, nor is led captive by his Appetites and Interests? Such a one is the happy Man, who is well qualify'd to find out Truth, and to make a right Judgment in all Things.

Some of all Parties pretend to these Qualifications; they would be thought to be disinterested and free from

Passion, they will affirm that no Humour or private End, nothing but an honest Zeal for Truth, gives Warmth to their Discourses; and yet it often happens, that before they conclude them, they give too much occasion to have it thought, that how large soever their Knowledge in other things may be, they are not well acquainted with their own Hearts. All which consider'd, how confidently soever we are persuaded of our own Integrity, tho' we think we have penetrated to the very bottom of our Hearts, it wou'd not be amiss to suspect ourselves sometimes, and to fear a Bias, even at the very instant we take care to avoid one.

For Truth being but one, and the rational Faculties not differing in Kind but in Degree, tho' there may be different measures of Understanding, there cou'd not be such Contradictions in Mens Opinions as we find there are, even in those who examine, as well as in those who do not, were they acted only by the love of Truth, and did not Self-love persuade them that they shall find their own particular Account by such an Opposition. I wou'd not be so understood, as if I thought that in all Controversies one side must needs be criminal, if not by wilfully opposing Truth, yet at least by an Indulgence of such unmortify'd Passions as estrange them from it. No, without doubt, great Allowances are to be made on the score of Education, Capacity, of Leisure and that opportunity of Information we have had. But this we may venture to say, that had we but a modest Opinion of ourselves, believing it as possible for us, as for those who contradict us, to be mistaken; did we behave ourselves answerable to such a Belief; were we seriously convinc'd that nothing is so much our Interest, as a readiness to admit of Truth from whatever Hand it comes, the greatest part of our Disputes would have a better Issue than we generally find. At least if we could not be so happy as to convince one another, our Contests would be manag'd with more Temper and Moderation, wou'd not conclude in such a breach of Charity,  
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or at best in such a Coldness for each other, as they usually do.

If we consider wisely, we shall find it to be our present Interest, as well as our future, to do that in reality which all of us pretend to ; that is, to search after and to follow Truth ; and to do it with all that Candour and Ingenuity which becomes a true Philosopher, as well as a good Christian ; making use of no Arguments but what we really believe, and giving them up contentedly, when we meet with stronger. Our *present Interest* is what weighs most with the generality, and what we usually make all other Considerations give place to. For what is it we contend for ? they who have so little Souls as to bait at any thing beneath the highest end, make *Reputation* their aim, and with it that Authority and Wealth which usually attend it. But now Reputation cannot be acquir'd, at least not a lasting one, by fallacious Reasonings. We may perhaps for a while get a Name by them among unwary Persons, but the World grows too quick-sighted to be long impos'd on. If a love of Truth do not, yet Envy and Emulation will set other Heads a work to discover our Ignorance or Fraud. They are upon the same design, and will not suffer us to go away with the Prize undeservedly. And besides, with how ill an Aspect must he needs appear, who does not reason fairly, and by consequence how unlike is he to gain on those who hear him ? There are but three Causes to which false Arguments can be referr'd, Ignorance, Rashness, or Design ; and the being suspected for any one of these, hinders us very much in acquiring that Reputation, Authority, or Preferment we desire. I must confess, were we sure the Fallacy would not be detected, and that we should not lie under the suspicion of it, we might gain our Point ; for provided the Paint do not rub off, good colouring may serve a present turn as well as a true Complexion. But there is little reason to hope for this, because of what was just now mention'd, and for other Reasons that might be added.

Now what can be more provoking than the Idea we have of a designing Person? of one who thinks his own Intellectuals so strong, and ours so weak, that he can make us swallow any thing, and lead us where he pleases? Such an one seems to have an Intention to reduce us to the vilest Slavery, the Captivation of our Understandings, which we justly reckon to be the highest Insolence. And since every one puts in for a share of Sense, and thinks he has no reason to complain of the distribution of it, whoever supposes that another has an over-weening Opinion of his own, must needs think that he undervalues his Neighbour's Understanding, and will certainly repay him in his own Coin, and deny him those Advantages he seems to arrogate.

The most we can say for ourselves, when the Weakness of our Arguments comes to be discover'd, is, that we were mistaken thro' Rashness or Ignorance; which, tho' more pardonable than the former, are no recommending Qualities. If we argue falsely, and know not that we do so, we shall be more pitied than when we do, but either way disappointed. And if we have added rash Censures of those who are not of our Mind, as we cannot so handsomely retreat, so neither will so fair Quarter be allow'd us, as those, who argue with Meekness, Modesty, and Charity, may well expect. When we have cast up our Account, and estimated the present Advantages that false Arguings bring us, I fear what we have got by a pretence to Truth, will not be found to countervail the Loss we shall sustain by the discovery that it was no more; which may induce us, if other Considerations will not, to be wary in receiving any Proposition ourselves, and restrain us in being forward to impose our Sentiments on others.

After all, 'tis a melancholy Reflexion, that a great part of Mankind stand in need of Arguments drawn from so low a Motive as worldly Interest, to persuade them to that, to which they have much greater Inducements. It is strange that we should need any other  
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Considerations besides the bare performance of our Duty, and those unspeakable Advantages laid up for all such as do it sincerely hereafter ; when we have the approbation of God, and the infinite Rewards he has propos'd to those who study to recommend themselves to him, for our Encouragement. How low are we sunk, if the Applause of Men, and the little Trifles which they can bestow, weigh any thing with us? I am therefore almost asham'd of having propos'd so mean a Consideration, but the degeneracy of the Age requir'd it : and they who perhaps at first follow Truth, as the *Jews* did once for the Loaves only, may at last be attracted by its own native Beauties.

As Nature teaches us *Logick*, so does it instruct us in *Rhetorick*, much better than Rules of Art ; which if they are good ones, are nothing else but those judicious Observations that Men of Sense have drawn from Nature, and that all who reflect on the operations of their own Minds, will find out themselves. The common Precepts of *Rhetorick* may teach us how to reduce ingenious ways of speaking to a certain Rule, but they do not teach us how to invent them. This is Nature's Work, and she does it best. There is as much difference between Natural and Artificial Eloquence, as there is between Paint, and true Beauty. All that is useful in this Art, is the avoiding certain evil ways of Writing and Speaking, and above all, an artificial and rhetorical Stile, compos'd of false Thoughts, Hyperboles, and forc'd Figures, which are the greatest Faults in *Rhetorick*.

I shall not therefore recommend, under the Name of *Rhetorick*, an Art of speaking floridly on all Subjects, and of dressing up Error and Impertinence in a quaint and taking Garb, any more than I did that wrangling, which goes by the Name of *Logick*, and which teaches us to dispute for and against all Propositions indefinitely, whether they are true or false. It is an Abuse both of Reason and Address, to press them into the service of a Trifle or an Untruth, and a Mistake to think that any Argument can be rightly made, or any Discourse truly eloquent,

eloquent, that does not illustrate and enforce Truth. For the design of *Rhetorick* is to remove those Prejudices that lie in the way of Truth, to reduce the Passions to the government of Reason, to place our Subject in a right Light, and excite our Hearers to a due Consideration of it. I know not what exactness of Method, pure and proper Language, Figures, insinuating ways of Address and the like signify, any farther than as they contribute to the service of Truth, by rendring our Discourse intelligible, agreeable, and convincing. They are indeed very serviceable to it, when they are duly manag'd; for good Sense loses much of its Efficacy by being ill express'd, and an ill Stile is nothing else but the neglect of some of these, or overdoing others of them.

Obscurity is one of the greatest faults in Writing, and does commonly proceed from a want of Meditation; for when we pretend to teach others what we do not understand ourselves, no wonder we do it at a sorry rate. 'Tis true, Obscurity is sometimes design'd, to conceal an erroneous Opinion which an Author dares not openly own, or which if it be discover'd, he has a mind to evade. And sometimes even an honest and good Writer, who studies to avoid it, may insensibly fall into it, by reason that his Ideas being become familiar to himself by frequent Meditation, a long train of them are readily excited in his Mind, by a word or two which he is us'd to annex to them; but it is not so with his Readers, who are perhaps strangers to his Meditations, and yet ought to have the same Idea rais'd in theirs that was in the Author's Mind, or else they cannot understand him. If, therefore, we desire to be intelligible to every body, our Expressions must be more plain and explicit than they needed to be, if we writ only for ourselves, or for those to whom our frequent Discourse has made our Ideas familiar.

Not that it is necessary to express at length all the process our Mind goes thro' in resolving a Question. This would spin out our Discourse to an unprofitable tediousness,

clearness, the operations of the Mind being much more speedy than those of the Tongue or Pen. But we should fold up our Thoughts so closely and neatly, expressing them in such significant, tho' few Words, as that the Reader's Mind may easily open and enlarge them. And if this can be done with facility we are perspicuous as well as strong; if with difficulty or not at all, we are perplexed and obscure Writers.

Scarce any thing conduces more to Clearness, the great beauty of Writing, than exactness of Method, nor perhaps to Persuasion; for by putting every thing in its proper place, with due Order and Connexion, the Reader's Mind is gently led where the Writer wou'd have it. Such a Style is easy without Success; copious, as that signifies the omission of nothing necessary, yet not verbose and tedious, nor stuff'd with nauseous Repe-titions, which they, who do not think before they write and dispose their Matter duly, can scarce avoid. The Method in thinking has been already shewn, and the same is to be observ'd in Writing; which if it be what it ought, is nothing else but the communicating to others the result of our frequent and deep Meditations, in such a manner as we judge most effectual to convince them of those Truths which we believe: always remembering that the most natural Order is ever best. That we must first prepare their Minds by removing those Prejudices and Passions which are in our way, and then propose our Reasons with all the Clearness and Force, with all the Tenderness and Good-nature we can.

And since the Clearness and Connexion, as well as the Emphasis and Beauty of a Discourse, depend in a great measure on the right use of the Particles, whoever wou'd write well, ought to inform themselves nicely in their Proprieties, an *And*, a *The*, a *But*, a *For*, &c. do very much perplex the Sense when they are misplaced, and make the Reader take it many times quite otherwise than the Writer meant it.

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I know not a more compendious way to good Speaking and Writing, than to choose out the most excellent in either, as a Model on which to form ourselves: Or rather, to imitate the Perfections of all, and avoid their Mistakes; for few are so perfect as to be without Fault, and few so bad as to have nothing good in them. A true Judgment distinguishes, and neither rejects the Good for the sake of the Bad, nor admits the Bad because of the Good that is mingled with it. No sort of Style but has its Excellency, and is liable to Defect. If care be not taken, the *Sublime*, which subdues us with nobleness of Thought and grandeur of Expression, will fly out of sight; and by being empty and bombast, become contemptible. The Plain and Simple will grow dull and abject; the Severe, dry and rugged; the Florid, vain and impertinent; the Strong, instead of rousing the Mind, will distract and entangle it by being obscure; even the Easy and Perspicuous, if it be too diffuse or over-delicate, tires us instead of pleasing. Good Sense is the principal thing, without which, all our polishing is of little worth; and yet if Ornaments be wholly neglected, very few will regard us. Studied and artificial Periods are not natural enough to please; they shew too much Solicitude about what does not deserve it, and a loose and careless Style declares too much Contempt of the Publick. Neither Reason nor Wit entertain us, if they are driven beyond a certain Pitch; and Pleasure itself is offensive if it be not judiciously dispens'd.

Every Author almost has some *Beauty* or *Blemish* remarkable in his Style, from whence it takes its Name; and every Reader has a peculiar taste of *Books* as well as *Meats*. One wou'd have the Subject exhausted; another is not pleas'd if somewhat be not left to enlarge on in his own Meditations, this affects a grave, that a florid Style; one is for Easiness, a second for Plainness, a third for Strength, a fourth for Politeness; and perhaps the great secret of Writing, is the mixing all these in so just a Proportion, that every one may taste what he likes without  
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being disgusted by its contrary ; and may find at once, that by the solidity of the Reason, the parity and propriety of the Expression, and insinuating agreeableness of Address, his Understanding is enlighten'd, his Affections subdu'd, and his Will duly regulated.

This is indeed the true end of Writing, and it wou'd not be hard for every one to judge how well they had answer'd it, wou'd they but lay aside Self-love, so much of it at least, as makes them partial to their own Productions. Did we consider our own with the same Severity, or but Indifferency, that we do another's Writing, we might pass a due Censure on it, might discern what Thought was crude or ill-express'd, what Reasoning weak, what Passage superfluous, where we were flat and dull, where extravagant and vain, and by criticizing on ourselves, do a greater kindness to the World than we can in making our Remarks on others. Nor shou'd we be at a loss, if we were impartial, in finding out Methods to inform, persuade and please ; for human Nature is for the most part much alike in all, and that which has a good Effect on us will, generally speaking, have the same on others. To guess what Success we are like to have, we need only suppose ourselves in the Place of those we address to, and consider how such a Discourse wou'd operate on us, if we had their Infirmities and Thoughts about us.

In doing this, we shall find there is nothing more improper than Pride and Positiveness, nor any thing more prevalent than an innocent Compliance with their Weakness : Such as pretends not to dictate to their Ignorance, but only to explain and illustrate what they did or might have known before, if they had consider'd it, and supposes that their Minds being employ'd about some other things, was the Reason why they did not discern it as well as we : For human Nature is not willing to own its Ignorance. Truth is so very attractive, there is such a natural Agreement between our Minds and it, that we care not to be thought so dull, as not to be able to find out by ourselves

ourselves such obvious Matters. We should therefore be careful, that nothing pass from us which upbraids our Neighbours Ignorance, but study to remove it, without appearing to take notice of it, and permit them to fancy, if they please, that we believe them as wise and good as we endeavour to make them. By this we gain their Affections, which is the hardest part of our Work, excite their Industry, and infuse a new Life into all generous Tempers, who conclude there is great Hopes, they may with a little pains attain what others think they know already, and are asham'd to fall short of the good Opinion we have entertain'd of them.

And since many would yield to the clear Light of Truth, were it not for the shame of being overcome, we shou'd convince, but not triumph, and rather conceal our Conquest than publish it. We doubly oblige our Neighbours, when we reduce them into the right Way, and keep it from being taken notice of that they were once in the wrong: which is certainly a much greater Satisfaction, than that blaze of Glory which is quickly out, that noise of Applause which will soon be over. For the gaining our Neighbour, at least, the having honestly endeavour'd it, and the leading our own Vanity in triumph, are real Goods, and such as we shall always have the comfort of. It is to be wish'd, that such Propositions as are not attended with the clearest Evidence, were deliver'd only by way of Enquiry, since even the brightest Truth, when dogmatically dictated, is apt to offend our Reason, and make Men imagine their Liberty is impos'd upon; so far is Positiveness from bringing any body over to our Sentiments. Besides, we are all of us liable to mistake, and few have Humility enough to confess themselves deceiv'd in what they have confidently asserted, but think they are oblig'd in honour to maintain an Opinion they have once been zealous for, how desirous soever they may be to get rid of it, cou'd they do it handsomly. Now a modest way of delivering our Sentiments assists us in this, and leaves

us at liberty to take either side of the Question, as Reason and riper Consideration shall determine.

In short, As thinking conformably to the nature of things is true Knowledge, so the expressing our Thoughts in such a way, as most readily, and with the greatest Clearness and Life, excites in others the very same Idea that was in us, is the best Eloquence. For if our Idea be conformable to the nature of the thing it represents, and its Relations duly stated, this is the most effectual way both to inform and persuade; since Truth being always amiable, cannot fail of attracting, when she is placed in a right Light, and those to whom we offer her are made able and willing to discern her Beauties. If therefore we thoroughly understand our Subject, and are zealously affected with it, we shall neither want suitable Words to explain, nor persuasive Methods to recommend it.

True Christians have really that Love for others, which all who desire to persuade, must pretend to: They have that *Probity* and *Prudence*, that *Civility* and *Modesty*, which the Masters of this Art say a good Orator must be endow'd with, and have pluck'd up those vicious Inclinations, from whence the most distasteful faults of Writing proceed. For why do we choose to be obscure, but because we intend to deceive, or would be thought to see much farther than our Neighbour? One sort of Vanity prompts us to be rugged and severe, and so possess'd with the imagin'd Worth and Solidity of our Discourse, that we think it beneath us to polish it: Another disposes us to elaborate and affected ways of Writing, to pompous and improper Ornaments; and why are we tediously copious, but that we fancy every Thought of ours is extraordinary? Contradiction is indeed for our Advantage, as tending to make us wiser; yet our Pride makes us impatient under it, because it seems to lessen that Esteem and Deference we desire should be paid us. Whence come those sharp Reflexions, those imagin'd strains of Wit, not to be endur'd among Christians, and which serve not to convince but to provoke,

voke, now arriv'd to a more scandalous degree of Rage and Insolence than ever? whence come they but from Ill-nature and Revenge, from a Contempt of others, and a desire to set forth our own Wit? Did we write less for ourselves, we should sooner gain our Readers, who are many times disgusted at a well-writ Discourse, if it carries a twang of Ostentation: And were our Temper as Christian as it ought to be, our Zeal wou'd be spent on the most weighty Things, not on little differences of Opinions.

I have made no Distinction in what has been said between Speaking and Writing, because tho' they are Talents which do not always meet, yet there is no material Difference between them. They write best, perhaps, who do it with the gentle and easy air of Conversation; and they talk best, who mingle solidity of Thought with the agreeableness of a ready Wit. As for *Pronunciation*, tho' it takes more with some Auditors many times than *good Sense*; there needs little to be said, in a Discourse which is not address'd to those that have business with the *Pulpit*, the *Bar*, or *St. Stephen's Chapel*; but to Gentlemen and Ladies, especially the latter, whom Nature does for the most part furnish with such a musical Tone, persuasive Air, and winning Address, as renders what they say sufficiently agreeable in private Conversation. And as to *Spelling*, which they are said to be defective in, if they do not believe, as they are usually told, that it is fit for them to be so, and that to write exactly is too *pedantick*, they may soon correct that Fault, by pronouncing their Words aright, and spelling them accordingly. I know this Rule will not always hold, because of an Imperfection in our Language, which has been often complain'd of, but is not yet amended: However, a little Observation in this Case, or Recourse to Books, will assist us; and if at any time we happen to mistake, by spelling as we pronounce, the Fault will be very venial, and Custom rather to be blamed than we.

Nothing

Nothing has been said of *Grammar*, tho' we cannot write properly if we transgress its Rules, supposing that Custom, and the reading of *English* Books, are sufficient to teach us the Grammar of our own Tongue, if we do but in any measure attend to them. And tho' the Ladies are generally accus'd of writing false *English*, if I may speak my own Experience, their Mistakes are not so common as are pretended, nor are they the only Persons guilty. What they most commonly fail in, is the Particles and Connexion: and that generally thro' a Briskness of Temper, which makes them forget; or Haste, which will not suffer them to read over again what went before. And indeed, those who speak true Grammar, unless they are very careless, cannot write false, since they need only peruse what they have writ, and consider whether they would express themselves thus in Conversation.



## P R I D E.

THE Sobriety of the Soul stands in a right governing its Passions and Affections, and to that there are many Virtues requir'd. Humility may well have the first Place, not only in respect of the Excellency of the Virtue, but also of its Usefulness towards the obtaining of all the rest; this being the Foundation on which all the others must be built: And he who hopes to gain them without this, will prove like the foolish Builder *who built his House upon the Sand*.

There are two sorts of Humility: As, the having a low and mean Opinion of ourselves, and the being content that others should have so of us. The former is contrary to Pride, the latter to Vain-glory; both are as absolutely necessary to Christians as it is to avoid the contrary Vices.

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The Sin of Pride is so great, that it cast the Angels out of Heaven; and if we may judge of the Sin by the Punishment, it was not only the first but the greatest Sin that ever the Devil himself has been guilty of. We need no better Proofs of its Hainousness, than that it is so extremely hateful to God, that besides that Instance of his punishing the Devil, we may frequently find in the Scriptures, *Every one that is proud in Heart is an Abomination to the Lord.* Again, *God resisteth the Proud.* Several other Texts might be quoted to the same Purpose, but 'tis needless, the Tenour of the Divine Writ being so entirely against this Vice, that none who ever read it, can be ignorant of the great Hatred God bears to this Sin of Pride. Now since it is certain God, who is all Goodness, hates nothing but as it is Evil, it must needs follow, that where God hates in so great a Degree, there must be a great Degree of Evil.

Pride is not more sinful than 'tis dangerous. How many other Sins does it draw us into? As Humility is the Root of all Virtue, so is this of all Vice. He that is proud sets himself up as his own God, and so can never submit himself to any other Rules or Laws than what he makes to himself. *The Ungodly is so proud that he careth not for God.* The Royal Psalmist tells us, 'tis his Pride that makes him despise God; and when a Man is once come to that, he is prepar'd for the Commission of all Sins. I might instance in a Multitude of particular Sins which naturally flow from this of Pride; as *Anger*, which the wise Man sets as the Effect of Pride, calling it *proud Wrath*; *Strife* and *Contention*, which he again notes to be the Offspring of Pride, *Only by Pride cometh Contention*: And both these are indeed the most natural Effects of Pride. He who thinks very highly of himself, expects much Submission and Observance from others, and therefore cannot but rage and quarrel whenever he thinks it not sufficiently paid. It would be endless to mention all the bitter Fruits of this bitter Root. Pride not only betrays us to many Sins, but also makes them incurable in us,

us, for it hinders the working of all Remedies. Those Remedies must either come from God or Man: If from God, they must be either the way of Meekness and Gentleness, or else of Sharpness and Punishment. Now if God by his Goodness essays to lead a proud Man to Repentance, he quite mistakes God's meaning, and thinks all the Mercies he receives are but the Reward of his own Desert, and so long 'tis sure he will never think he needs Repentance. But if on the other side God uses him more sharply, and lays Afflictions and Punishments upon him, those in a proud Heart cause nothing but Murmurings and hating of God, as if he did him Injury in those Punishments. As for Remedies that can be us'd by Man, they again must be either by way of Correction or Exhortation. Corrections from Men will sure never work more on a proud Heart than those from God; for he that can think God unjust in them, will much rather believe it of a Man. And Exhortations will do as little; for let a proud Man be admonish'd, tho' never so mildly and lovingly, he looks on it as a Disgrace, and therefore instead of confessing or amending the Fault, he falls to reproaching his Reprover, as an over-busy or censorious Person, and for that greatest and most precious Act of Kindness, looks on him as his Enemy. Now one that thus stubbornly resists all Means of Cure, must be concluded in a most degenerate State. The Punishment that attends the Sin of Pride, will need little Proof, when it is consider'd that God is the proud Man's profest Enemy, that he hates and resists him, there can then be little Doubt that he who has so mighty an Adversary shall be sure to smart for it. How severely is this Sin threaten'd in Scripture? *Pride goeth before Destruction, and an haughty Spirit before a Fall.* Again, speaking of the Proud, the wise Man assures us, *Though Hand join in Hand, yet they shall not be unpunished.* The Decree, it seems, is unalterable, and whatever Endeavours are us'd to preserve the proud Man, they are but vain, for he *shall not go unpunish'd.* This is very remarkable in the Story of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who, tho' a King,

King, the greatest in the World, yet for his Pride was driven from among Men to dwell and feed with Beasts. And it is most frequently seen, that this Sin meets with very extraordinary Judgments even in this Life. But if it should not, let not the proud Man think he has escap'd God's Vengeance, for it is sure there will be a most sad Reckoning in the next. If God spar'd not the proud Angels. but cast them into Hell, let no Man hope to speed better.

The Folly, as well as the Sin of this Vice, will appear, if we consider the several things of which Men are wont to be proud, as the Goods of Nature, the Goods of Fortune, or the Goods of Grace.

By the Goods of Nature are meant Beauty, Strength, Wit, and the like and the being proud of any of these is a great Piece of Folly. We are very apt to mistake, and think ourselves handsom or witty when we are not, and then there cannot be a more ridiculous Folly than to be proud of what we have not, and such every one esteems it in another Man, tho' he never supposes it his own Case, and so never discerns it in himself. Wherefore there is nothing more despicable amongst all Men, than a proud Fool; yet every Man, that entertains high Opinions of his own Wit, is in Danger of being thus deceiv'd; a Man's own Judgment of himself being of all others the least to be trusted. But suppose we be not out in judging, yet what is there in any of these natural Endowments which is worth the being proud of, there being scarce any of them which some Creature or other has not in a greater Degree than Man? How much does the Whiteness of the Lily, and the Redness of the Rose, exceed the White and Red of the fairest Face? What a Multitude of Creatures is there that far surpass Man in Strength and Swiftnes? And several others there are, which as far as concerns any useful Ends of theirs, act much more wisely than most of us. They are therefore often propos'd to us in Scripture, by way of Example, and 'tis then surely great Unreasonableness for us to think highly of ourselves, for such things as are common to us  
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with Beasts and Plants. But if they were as excellent as we fancy them, yet they are not at all durable. They are impair'd and lost by divers Means: A Frenzy will destroy the rarest Wit, a Sickness blast the freshest Beauty, and reduce the greatest Strength; or however old Age will be sure to do all. Besides, these Goods of Nature, how admirable soever, are not our Acquisitions, but given or rather lent us by another, and therefore 'tis wondrous Vanity to be proud of them. No Man can think he did any thing towards the procuring his natural Beauty or Wit, and so will have no Reason to value himself for them; *What hast thou, saith St. Paul, which thou hast not received? wherefore then boastest thou thyself?* The Folly is as great to be proud of the Goods of Fortune, by which are meant, Wealth, Honour, and the like. For it is sure they add nothing of true Worth to the Man: Somewhat of outward Pomp and Bravery they may help him to, but that makes no Change in the Person. You may load an Ass with Money, or deck him with rich Trappings, yet still you will not make him a whit the nobler kind of Beast by either of them. Besides, these are things we have no hold of, they vanish often before we are aware. He who is rich to-day may be poor to-morrow, and then will be the less pity'd by all in his Poverty, the prouder he was when he was rich. We have them all but as Stewards, to lay out for our Master's Use, and therefore should rather think how to make up our Accounts, than pride ourselves in our Receipts. Whatever of these we have, they, as well as the former, are not owing to ourselves; but if they be lawfully gotten we owe them only to God, whose Blessing it is that maketh *rich*; if unlawfully, we have them upon such Terms that we have very little Reason to brag of them.

By the Goods of Grace we mean any Virtue a Man has. These things must be own'd to be very valuable, they being infinitely more precious than all the World, yet to be proud of them is, of all the rest, the highest Folly, not  
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only in the foregoing Respect that we help not ourselves to them, Grace being above all things most immediately God's Work in us; but especially in this, that the being proud of Grace is the sure way to lose it. God, who gives Grace to the Humble, will take it from the Proud. For if, as we see in the Parable, the Talent was taken from him who had only put it to no Use at all, how shall we hope to have it continu'd to him that has put it to so ill Uses, instead of trading with it for God, has traffick'd with it for Satan? And as he will lose the Grace for the future, so will he lose all the Reward of it for the time past. For let a Man have never so many good Acts, yet, if he be proud of them, that Pride shall be charg'd on him to his Destruction, but the Good shall never be remembred to his Reward. This proves it to be a most wretched Folly to be proud of Grace: 'tis like that of Children, that pull those things in pieces they are most fond of; but yet much worse than that of theirs, for we not only lose the thing, and that the most precious that can be imagin'd, but we must also be eternally punish'd for doing so; there being nothing that shall be so sadly reckon'd for in the next World, as the Abuse of Grace; and certainly there can be no greater Abuse of it, than to make it serve for an End so directly contrary to that for which it was given, it being given to make us humble, not proud; to magnify God, not ourselves.

The Necessity of flying this Sin must therefore be apparent to all good Christians, who are so seriously to consider what has been already said concerning it, as may work in them not some slight Dislike, but a deep and irreconcilable Hatred to the Sin: To make them watchful over their own Hearts, that they may not cherish any Beginnings of it, nor suffer them to feed on the Fancy of their own Worth; but whenever any such Thought arises, to beat it down immediately with the Remembrance of some of their Follies or Sins, and so make this very Motion of Pride an Occasion of Humility. In order to this they must never compare themselves

selves with those they think more foolish or more wicked than they are, that they may not be like the *Pharisee*, and extol themselves for being better. But if they will needs make Comparisons, let them do it with the Wise and Godly, and then they will find they come so far short, as it may help to pull down their high Esteem of themselves. Let them also be earnest in Prayer, that God would root out all Degrees of this Sin in them, and make them one of those *poor in Spirit*, to whom the Blessing even of Heaven itself is promis'd.

'Tis observable that God, who has made of *one Blood all Nations of the Earth*, has so equally distributed all the most valuable Privileges of human Nature, as if he design'd to preclude all insulting of one Man over another. Neither has he only thus insinuated it by his Providence, but has enforc'd it by his Commands. We find in the Levitical Law what a peculiar Care he takes to moderate the Anger of judicial Correction upon this very Account, lest *thy Brother be despised in thine Eyes*. So unreasonable did he think it, that the Crime or Misery of one should be the Exaltation of another. Pride is never more apt to exert itself than by assuming a Superiority over the Guilty and Unfortunate. St. Paul brands it as a great Guilt of the *Corinthians*, that they, upon Occasion of the incestuous Person, were *puffed up when they should have mourned*. When we see a dead Corps, we do not insult over it, or brag of our own Health and Vigour, but it rather damps us, and makes us reflect, that it may, we know not how soon, be our own Condition. And certainly the Spectacles of spiritual Mortality, should have the same Operation. We have the same Principle of Corruption with our lapsed Brethren, and have nothing but God's Grace to secure us from the same Effects, which by all insulting Reflexions we forfeit, for he *gives Grace only to the Humble*. St. Paul says, *If any Man be overtaken in a Fault, restore such a one in the Spirit of Meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted*. The Falls of others ought to excite

our Pity towards them, our Caution to ourselves, and our Thankfulness to God, if he has preserv'd us from the like: For, *who made thee differ from another?* But if we spread our Sails, and triumph over their Wrecks, we expose ourselves to worse. Other Sins, like Rocks, may split us, yet the Lading be sav'd: But Pride, like a Gulph, swallows us up. Our very Virtues, when so leaven'd, becoming Weights and Plumets, to sink us to the deeper Ruin. The Apostle's Counsel is therefore very pertinent to this Matter, *Be not high-minded; but fear.*

As in all these Reflexions we have had particular Regard to the weaker Sex, so must we particularly in this Article of Pride. Not that we would not recommend to them, to encourage that generous Spirit which disdains the false Flattery of Men, and is a good Guard of their Virtue and Honour: But since they have, not without some Reason, been charg'd with Vanity and Affectation, as Frailties more peculiarly theirs than the other Sexes, who are however far from being free from them, we must with more than ordinary Earnestness give them Caution against Vanity, which for the most part is attended by Affectation, insomuch that one can hardly tell how to divide them. I will not call them *Twins*, because more properly, Vanity is the Mother, and Affectation the darling Daughter. Vanity is the Sin, and Affectation the Punishment. The first may be called the Root of Self-love, the other the Fruit. Vanity is never at its full Growth 'till it spreads into Affectation, and then it is compleat.

Not to dwell any longer upon the Definition of them, we will pass to the Means and Motives to avoid them: In order to it, the Sex are to consider, that the World challenges the Right of Esteem and Applause; and where any assume, by their single Authority, to be their own Carvers, it grows angry, and never fails to seek *Revenge*. If we measure a Fault by the Greatness of the Penalty, there are few of a higher Size than *Vanity*, as there is scarce a Punishment which can be heavier than that of being laugh'd at.

[Vanity

Vanity makes a Woman, tainted with it, so top-full of herself, that she spills it upon the Company ; and because her own Thoughts are entirely employ'd in Self-contemplation, she endeavours, by an unhappy Mistake, to confine her Acquaintance to the same narrow Circle of that which only concerns her Ladyship, forgetting she is not of half that Importance to the World, that she is to herself ; so much out is she in her Value, by being her own Appraiser. She will fetch such a Compass in Discourse, to bring in her beloved Self, and rather than fail, her fine Petticoat, that there can hardly be a more comical Scene, than such a Trial of ridiculous Ingenuity. It is a Pleasure to see her angle for Commendations ; and rise so dissatisfy'd with the ill-bred Company, if they will not bite : To observe her throwing her Eyes about to fetch in Prisoners. She cruises like a Privateer, and is so out of Countenance, if she returns without Booty, that it is no ill Piece of Comedy. She is so eager to draw Respect, that she always misses it ; yet thinks it so much her Due, that when she fails she grows waspish, not considering that it is impossible to commit a Rape upon the Will ; that it must be fairly gain'd, and will not be taken by Storm ; and that in this Case the Tax ever rises highest by a Benevolence. If the World, instead of admiring her imaginary Excellencies, takes the Liberty to laugh at them, she appeals from it to herself, for whom she gives Sentence, and proclaims it to all Companies. On the other side, if encourag'd by a civil Word, she is so obliging that she will give Thanks for being laugh'd at, in good Language. She takes a Compliment for a Demonstration, and sets it up as an Evidence even against her Looking-glass. But the good Lady being all this while in a most profound Ignorance, forgets that Men would not let her talk upon them, and throw so many senseless Words at their Heads, if they did not intend to put her Person to Fine and Ransom for her Impertinence. Good Words for any other Lady are so many Stones thrown at her : She can by no means bear them ; they

make her so uneasy that she cannot keep her Seat, but up she rises, and goes home half burst with Anger and strait Lacing. If by great Chance she says any thing that has Sense in it, she expects such an Excessive Rate of Commendations, that to her thinking, the Company ever goes away in her Debt. She looks upon Rules as things made for the common People, and not for Persons of her Rank; and this Opinion sometimes tempts her to extend her Prerogative to the dispensing with the Commandments. If by great Fortune she happens in spite of her *Vanity* to be honest, she is so troublesome with it, that as far as in her lies she makes a scurvy thing of it. Her bragging of her Virtue looks as if it cost her so much pains to get the better of herself, that the Inferences are very ridiculous: Her good Humour is generally apply'd to the laughing at good Sense. It would do one good to see how heartily she despises any thing that is fit for her to do. The greatest Part of her Fancy is laid out in choosing of her Gown, as her Discretion is chiefly employ'd in not paying for it. She is faithful to the Fashion, to which not only her Opinion but her Senses are wholly resign'd. So obsequious she is to it, that she would be reconcil'd even to Virtue, with all its Faults, if she had her Dancing-master's Word that it was practis'd at Court.

To a Woman so compos'd, when Affectation comes in to improve her Character, it is then rais'd to the highest Perfection: She first sets up for a fine thing, and for that Reason will distinguish herself, right or wrong, in every thing she does. She would have it thought that she is made of so much the finer Clay, and so much more sifted than ordinary, that she has no common Earth about her. To this End she must neither move nor speak like other Women, because it would be vulgar, and therefore must have a Language of her own, since ordinary *English* is too coarse for her. The Looking-glass in the Morning dictates to her all the Motions of the Day, which by how much the more study'd, are so much the more mistaken.

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She comes into a Room as if her Limbs were set on with ill-made Screws, which makes the Company fear the pretty thing should leave some of its artificial Person upon the Floor. She does not like herself as God Almighty made her, but will have some of her own Workmanship, which is so far from making her a better thing than a Woman, that it turns her into a worse Creature than a Monkey. She falls out with Nature, against which she makes War without admitting a Truce, those Moments excepted in which her Galant may reconcile her to it. When she has a mind to be soft and languishing, there is something so unnatural in that affected Easiness, that her Frowns cou'd not be by many Degrees so forbidding. When she wou'd appear unreasonably humble, one may see she is so excessively proud that there is no enduring it: There is such an impertinent *Smile*, such a satisfy'd *Simper*, when she faintly disowns some fulsom Commendation a Man happens to bestow upon her against his Conscience, that her Thanks for it are more visible under such a Disguise, than they cou'd be if she shou'd print them. If a handsomer Woman takes any liberty of dressing out of the ordinary Rules, the mistaken Lady follows without distinguishing the unequal Pattern, and makes herself uglier by an Example misplac'd, either forgetting the privilege of good Looks in another, or presuming without sufficient Reason upon her own. Her Discourse is a senseless Chime of empty Words, a heap of Compliments, so equally apply'd to different Persons, that they are neither valu'd nor believ'd. Her Eyes keep pace with her Tongue, and are therefore always in Motion. One may discern that they generally incline to the compassionate side; and that notwithstanding her Pretence to Virtue, she is gentle to distressed Lovers, and Ladies that are merciful. She will repeat the tender Part of a Play so feelingly, that the Company may guess without Injustice she was not altogether a disinterested *Spectator*. She thinks that Paint and Sin are conceal'd by railing at them.

Upon the whole, being divided between the two opposites of Pride, her Beauty and her Virtue, she is often tempted to give broad Hints that some body is dying for her; and of the two she is less unwilling to let the World think she may be sometimes profan'd, than that she is never worshipp'd.

Very great Beauty may perhaps so dazzle for a time, that Men may not so clearly see the deformity of these Affectations; but when the Brightness goes off, and the Lover's Eyes are by that means set at Liberty to see things as they are, he will naturally return to his Senses, and recover the Mistake into which the Lady's good Looks had at first engag'd him. When he is once undeceiv'd, he ceases to worship that as a Goddess which he sees only an artificial Shrine, mov'd by Wheels and Springs to delude him. Such Women please only like the first opening of a Scene, that has nothing to recommend it but the being *new*. They may be compar'd to Flies, that have pretty shining Wings for two or three hot Months, but the first cold Weather makes an end of them; so the latter Season of these fluttering Creatures is dismal. From their nearest Friends they receive a very faint Respect, from the rest of the World the utmost degree of Contempt.

This Picture as gay as it is, is most likely to have an effect on the Minds of those gay Ladies that can make a jest of good Counsel, but cannot bear to be made a jest of themselves, which Vanity and Affectation will certainly do. Their Deformity well consider'd is Instruction enough, for the same Reason that the sight of a Drunkard is a better Sermon against that Vice, than the best that was ever preach'd upon it.

After having said thus much against Vanity, we must remind the Ladies that we do not intend to apply the same Censure to *Pride* well plac'd and rightly defin'd. It is an ambiguous Word; one kind of it is as much a Virtue as the other is a Vice. But we are naturally so apt to choose the worst, that it is become dangerous to recommend the best side of it. A

A Woman is not to be proud of her fine Gown, nor, when she has less Wit than her Neighbours, to comfort herself that she has more Lace. Some Ladies put so much Weight upon Ornaments, that, if one cou'd see into their Hearts, it wou'd be found that even the thoughts of Death are made less heavy to them by the contemplation of their being laid out in State and honourably attended to the Grave.

One may come a good deal short of such an Extreme, and yet still be sufficiently impertinent, by setting a wrong value upon Things which ought to be used with more Indifference. A Lady must not appear solicitous to engross Respect to herself, but be content with a reasonable Distribution, and allow it to others, that she may have it returned to her. She is not to be troublesomely nice, nor to distinguish herself by being too delicate, as if ordinary things were too coarse for her. This is an unmanly and offensive Pride, and where it is practis'd deserves to be mortify'd, of which it seldom fails. She is not to lean too much upon her Quality, much less to despise those that are below it. Some make Quality an Idol, and then their Reason must fall down and worship it. They would have the World think that no Amends can ever be made for the want of a great Title, or an ancient Coat of Arms. They imagine that, with these Advantages, they stand upon the higher Ground, which makes them look down upon Merit and Virtue as things inferior to them. This Mistake is not only senseless but criminal too, in putting a greater Price upon that which is a piece of good Luck, than upon things which are valuable in themselves. Laughing is not enough for such a Folly, it must be severely whipp'd, as it justly deserves. It will be confest, there are frequent Temptations given Persons of Rank to be angry, and by that to have their Judgments corrupted in these Cases. But they are to be resisted, and the utmost that is to be allow'd, is, when those of a new Edition will forget themselves, so as either to brag of their weak side, or

to endeavour to hide their Meanness by their Insolence, to cure them by a little seasonable Rallery, a little Sharpness well-plac'd without dwelling long upon it.

These and many other kinds of Pride are to be avoided.

That which is to be recommended to Ladies, is an Emulation to raise themselves to a Character, by which they may be distinguish'd, an Eagerness of Precedence in Virtue, and all such other things as may gain them a greater share of the good Opinion of the World. Esteem to Virtue is like cherishing Air to Plants and Flowers, which makes them blow and prosper; and for that Reason it may be allow'd to be in some degree the Cause, as well as the Reward of it. That Pride which leads to a good End cannot be a Vice, since it is the beginning for a Virtue; and to be pleas'd with just Applause is so far from a Fault, that it wou'd be an ill Symptom in a Woman, who should not place the greatest part of her Satisfaction in it. Humility is, no doubt, a great Virtue, but it ceases to be so when it is afraid to scorn an ill thing. Against Vice and Folly 'tis becoming Ladies to be haughty, but they must not carry the contempt of things to Arrogance towards Persons; and it must be done with fitting Distinctions, else it may be inconvenient by being unseasonable. A Pride that raises a little Anger, to be outdone in any thing that is good, will have so good an Effect that it is very hard to allow it to be a Fault.

It is no easy Matter to carry even between these two differing kinds of Pride; but they should remember that 'tis safer for a Woman to be thought too proud than too familiar.

The Folly and Wickedness of this Vice having been thus explain'd, as well with respect to our Conduct in civil Life, as in a Christian: It will appear not only so hainous, but so ridiculous, that were our Concern for this World only, methinks enough has been said to make all reasonable People to detest it.



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