

to devise plans which may abate human misery, and capacitate those of the community, who are most peculiarly liable to misfortunes, for laying such foundations in early life, as will most effectually guard the avenues of want and wretchedness in riper years: such, I conceive, is providing the means of education, upon so liberal, easy, and extensive a system, as that all, of every rank, may be equally benefited by the institution—for that is the best charity, which prevents the ills of life. Would

we wish that the preaching of the gospel should not be lost labour and expense—would we wish that the children of the poor should escape the consequences of ignorance and impiety, and become useful to themselves, and blessings to society—let a wide door be thrown open to them, for acquiring a plain, but useful education: human wisdom and benevolence cannot contrive any expedient so competent to these objects, as
PUBLIC FREE SCHOOLS.

New York, December 16, 1789.

MISCELLANIES.

Essay on the influence of religion, in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church at Salem, S. C.

NUMBER I.

THAT our laws do not operate with sufficient force, is a truth too glaring to escape observation. It is seen—felt—and lamented by every sincere lover of his country. Different causes, no doubt, co-operate to produce this effect. To investigate all these, does not fall within my present design; though it might be of singular service to the state: for as in the human, so in the body politic, the cause of a disease being once discovered, the remedy is more easily prescribed, and the deleterious effect more successfully counteracted. It is more to my purpose, to observe, that the general neglect of religion, which prevails among us, is one great, if not the chief cause, why our laws are so feeble in their operation. Immorality is the natural consequence of impiety. An irreligious will always be an immoral people: and among such, good and wholesome laws can never be executed with punctuality.

Some of our laws may be erroneous or defective—and not framed with a sufficient regard to the spirit of the people; and this hath been assigned by superficial thinkers as the only reason why they are not carried into execution. This, I think is a great mistake. Our laws, though they may partake of that imperfection, which is the common

mark of all human productions, are in general salutary, and calculated to promote our political happiness, if they were properly executed. Here lies the grand defect—a defect, which is not to be attributed solely, or even principally, to the badness of our laws—but to some other causes. Whatever these may be, the effect is sufficiently alarming; and threatens a speedy dissolution of our government. Let our laws be ever so good, if they are not properly executed, our government can be of no long duration.

A transient view of those states and kingdoms, which have made the most striking figure in the history of the world, and which have been most renowned for the felicity of their government, will convince us, that religion was by them always considered as a matter of great importance to civil society.

The greatest politicians, and most celebrated legislators of antiquity, depended much on this, to give sanction to their laws, and make them operate with vigour and facility.

If we carefully consider the nature of religion and of civil government, we will be led to conclude, that in this they did not act at random—but from the most profound knowledge of human nature, and the dictates of the soundest policy. The manners of the people, though so little attended to by our legislators, are confessed by all to be of the utmost consequence in a commonwealth. The most profigate poli-

tician can expatiate on the necessity of good morals; but we hear little of religion, from our most respectable statemen. When the discussion is of politics, she is generally kicked out of doors as having nothing to do either with morality or civil policy. The inseparable connexion between this daughter of heaven, and her genuine offspring, morality—is forgotten—and her influence on civil society almost wholly overlooked. For the better arrangement of our thoughts on this extensive subject, we shall—

I. Consider religion under its more general notion, as comprehending the belief of a deity, a providence, and a future state of rewards and punishments.

II. We shall consider the christian religion in particular; and, as we pass along, endeavour to shew the influence of both on civil society.

That religion is of great importance to society, is universally acknowledged. Assuming this for granted, let us proceed to enquire how it operates, to produce those effects, which are confessed to be of such singular service. It is a common observation, that we are so formed, as to be greatly influenced by whatever works upon our hopes or our fears. Now, it is by taking hold on these, that religion produces those salutary effects, of which we now speak; thus restraining men from vice, by the dread of punishment—and alluring them to virtue, by the hope of reward. These are the two principles, or if you please, passions, in human nature, which first prompted men to enter into the social union—fear of violence from each other—and hope of security by association. And it is only by working on these passions, that the union of men, in the social state, can be rendered permanent, and laws operate with that energy, which is necessary to obtain their end.

Those who firmly believe, that there is a God, who governs the world, who sees all their actions, and who will certainly reward virtue and punish vice—must undoubtedly be influenced by this belief—and restrained, at least in some

measure, from evil, and excited to good.

It must be confessed, indeed, that there are too many, that profess to believe the doctrines of religion, who yet seem to be very little influenced by them. Hurried away by the violence of their passions, they frequently transgress the bounds, which religion prescribes; and prefer the gratification of present appetite, to the enjoyment of future good. But we must not hence conclude, that religion is in no degree a curb to the licentiousness of men. Those, who, in some instances, act thus contrary to their principles, would go much further, were they void of those principles, and the reins laid on the neck of appetite. It will not follow, that because religion does not restrain from immorality, totally and universally, therefore it is no restraint at all. By the same way of reasoning, we might prove, that civil laws lay no restraint upon men, because they do not entirely refrain all men, at all times, and in all instances.

NUMBER II.

IN order that we may be more fully convinced of the utility, and even necessity of religion, to the well-being, we might venture to say, to the very existence of civil society, it will be necessary to enquire a little into the essential defects of the best-constituted government possible.

If we consider the end of civil society, and the evils it was designed to remedy, we will be convinced, from its very nature, that it cannot reach that end, nor guard against those evils—without the aid of religion. Let it suffice, to observe, that security of life, liberty, and property, is the precise and specific end of the social compact. Other advantages it brings with it, and answers many other valuable purposes. But the evils, for which it was designed as a remedy, are injustice, violence, rapine, mutual slaughter, and bloodshed. The manner, in which men aim at the cure of these evils, is by laws enacted with common consent, enforced by a sanction, and committed to the magistrate, to be strictly and impartially carried into execution.

That civil government may fully and completely obtain its end, it is necessary that its laws should have such a sanction, and operate in such a manner, as to prevent or punish all crimes whatsoever, which may be injurious to the community or tend to its dissolution. It will, I suppose, be readily granted, on all hands, that there never were, nor ever will be, laws so sanctioned, as to operate in this manner. Hence appears the insufficiency of civil society to answer its end.

The two great sanctions of all laws have been generally reckoned, reward and punishment: and, indeed, without these two sanctions, every one must see, that government cannot, in any tolerable degree, answer its end, or laws operate in such a manner as is necessary, to secure its very existence. But civil society, without the support of religion, is altogether destitute of one of these sanctions; and can apply the other but in a very partial manner, and under great restrictions.

I. Civil society wholly wants the sanction of reward.

In an age and place so highly enlightened in the nature and principles of sound policy, I shall not enter into a formal proof, that reward is not, and cannot be the sanction of civil society, considered in itself. It will be sufficient just to observe, "that no state whatever can possess a fund large enough to reward all its subjects for obedience to the laws, unless it be first drawn from them by a tax, to be paid back as a reward." Government can, indeed, and it hath been the custom in all governments, to reward particular subjects, for eminent services; but every one must see, that this is something very different from the idea of reward, considered as the sanction of civil laws. A reward, barely for obedience to the good and wholesome laws of his country, is what no wise subject expects, and no society can bestow. Without enter-

NOTE.

* It may, perhaps, be said, that protection is the reward conferred on every individual, for his observance of the

ing any further into this subject, we shall take it for granted, that civil society, in itself, totally wants one of those sanctions which are necessary to enforce its laws. That this is a very great and essential defect, will, we hope, be allowed by every competent judge. How, and in what degree religion supplies this defect, will be seen hereafter. At present, let us a little enquire,

II. Into the effects of punishment, considered as a sanction. This is the proper and only sanction of civil laws. But how imperfectly it can be enforced by society, will appear from the following considerations:

I. Civil government cannot punish secret crimes.

That these abound in every society, is matter of universal experience: that they are injurious to it, is too plain to admit of the least doubt; that they are even multiplied by it, a little attention to human nature, will evince. When men are restrained from open transgres-

NOTE.

laws. And here I imagine, if any where, it is, that so many have fallen into a mistake in this matter. To this it may be briefly replied, that protection is a debt due from all to every individual, for that portion of his natural liberty, which he hath given up, in the original compact. If protection, in strict propriety of speech, be reward—then withdrawing it must be punishment; which it is not invariably, but only accidentally. The consequence of withdrawing protection is, or at least always ought to be, banishment. But banishment is not always a punishment. It becomes so only by accident. It is so intentionally, but not always consequentially. Punishment is not of the essence of banishment; for it would be easy to put a case, where banishment must be considered, not as a punishment, but a very great blessing. This shews, that protection, considered as a reward, is not the sanction of human laws, in the same sense that punishment is, to which it ought to be properly opposed, if indeed it be the sanction of reward.

sion, by the terror of laws, and the dread of punishment, it is natural for them to fly to the covert of secrecy, that they may evade the laws, and escape with impunity. They know, that civil judicatures take cognizance only of those crimes, which are apparent: and if they can only conceal their guilt from the eyes of men, they are sure to escape that punishment, which is the sanction of human laws. This will deter them from open violence; but at the same time, spur them on to secret craft and stratagem. This will lead them to study and improve all the latent arts of mischief and malice: and the very security which society affords, by throwing men off their guard, gives designing villains an opportunity of practising these with greater success. I crave the reader's particular attention to this circumstance; as it is of the first importance to the point in hand; and in the clearest manner shews the necessity of religion in civil government.

II. Civil society not only cannot punish secret crimes, but, in some cases, cannot adequately punish even such as are apparent, and can be clearly proven. So inordinate are the appetites of men—and so violent the impulse of the sensual passions—that the severe punishment of one crime, would, sometimes, open a door to others of a more atrocious nature and pernicious tendency. We give only one instance of this kind. The judicious reader may, if he be so disposed, supply others of a similar nature. Fornication is undoubtedly injurious, and attended with very pernicious consequences to a state; but notwithstanding this, it would not be wisdom in any government to punish it in proportion to its evil influence. The reason is, because such punishment would lead to more flagitious lusts—to more enormous and to unnatural crimes. Accordingly, we find, that no great, wise, and flourishing community hath ever punished fornication, as its pernicious effects on society confessedly deserve. It will be difficult to assign any other reason for this, than that which we have just now mentioned.

III. Imperfect rights, by some termed the duties of imperfect obligation—such as gratitude, hospitality, charity, &c.—are not the proper objects of civil laws. They cannot conveniently reach these; nor enforce the observance of them by penal sanction. We have no laws among us to punish the neglect of these duties; and civil society, at least in its legislative capacity, takes no notice of them: for this I suppose, two reasons may be given.

I. The violation of these is not supposed so immediately and directly to strike at the existence of the social union, as the violation of the duties of perfect obligation.

II. There can be no precise and fixed rule laid down, for the regulation of men's conduct with respect to these duties.

(To be continued.)

Extract of a letter to the honourable William Samuel Johnson, L. L. D. president of Columbia college in New York, from the honourable Hugh Williamson, M. D. and L. L. D. dated 14th Sept. 1789.

“WHILE the citizens of the united states are shaking off the chains of political prejudice, and making improvements in useful knowledge—it may be questioned whether the rising generation are conducted by the shortest path in pursuit of knowledge, or continue to be deceived and led astray by the mystic charm of ancient opinion. It has long been considered as necessary for every youth, who would make a figure in life, to understand Latin and Greek. Five or six years must be devoted to the study of dead languages. This is a heavy tax on life. Does it appear to be a necessary tax? ‘Life is short,’ says Hippocrates, ‘and the art is long.’ If this observation was proper, when referred to the healing art alone, it must be extremely proper, when referred to all that a man should learn, in order to become a useful member of society. At twenty-one years, it is expected, that we shall enter upon the

supplements of life. Deduct the years of childhood, and a moderate time for learning to read and write our national language—half the remaining time of discipline is spent—in what? Not in learning moral duties and civil history—nor the nature and use of things; but in learning the names of things, in a language that we are never to speak.

To a native of China or Japan, this would appear worse than ridiculous; he must call it the murder of time. We can easily discover the origin of this grievous servitude; but we cannot possibly determine why it should be entailed upon civilized Europeans and their posterity forever. While the sciences were buried under the ruins of Greece and Rome, the only thing called learning appears to have been in the hands of the clergy. They were obliged to read Latin, that they might be able to read their prayers; and they were too lazy to learn any thing besides. The education of youth was in their hands; because they were the only men of letters: and it was natural for them to be zealous in praise of Latin, while it was the only knowledge by which they were distinguished from the ignorant vulgar. Viewing the subject in this light, we cannot wonder, that the Latin tongue has long been regarded as the first of all human attainments.

For many ages, books were usually written in this language; because it was, in some manner, sacred; and because the readers of books understood no other common language. Hence it was, that the man, who desired to read books in law, physic, or theology, was obliged to understand Latin. How does it happen, that we are still obliged to learn Latin, after the original cause has been removed—every useful book being now published in the mother tongue? Is it not because our ancestors trod in this path—and because teachers of Latin and Greek are more numerous than teachers of philosophy? Memory alone is required: genius and understanding being equally unnecessary to forming a teacher of languages.

It is true, that other reasons have been

given for the study of Latin and Greek. We are told, that a thorough acquaintance with the Greek and Roman classics is necessary to making an accurate scholar, and to forming a good taste. This argument would be incomprehensible to a learned Asiatic. He might possibly enquire, whether the careful study of English or French grammatically, did not tend as much towards forming an accurate scholar, as the study of Latin? Whether the learned Romans, who generally understood two languages, had more taste than the Greeks, who understood none but their own? Perhaps he might be told, that the advantage is supposed to have been in favour of the Greeks: perhaps, it was because they cultivated their own language alone.

It is admitted that modern practice of law or physic are not supposed to be learned and good, unless they are variegated, shaded, and ornamented by phrases of Latin or Greek. Every process at law must be illuminated by two or three Latin words; every medical prescription must, at least, begin with a Latin word, which serves as an amulet; and books, in the learned professions, are universally larded with technical phrases, sentences, or quotations, in Greek or Latin; just as we see masons insert a few stones in the front of a brick house; who, by the way, have the better reason for their practice. Perhaps, the time may come, when books shall be wholly written in one language; and when gentlemen of the faculty and of the long robe may expect the reputation of being learned, without being obliged to pelt their audience with hard words, that are not understood.

I do not complain of the old custom, merely because it was founded on ignorance, nor because it consumes much time and labour to little purpose; but because I would redeem the time, that is prodigally expended on dead languages, for acquiring knowledge that is ornamental and may be useful in every path of life.

According to the general practice, some years are devoted to mathematics, logic, ethics, and the first lines of natu-

tural and experimental philosophy; but these, after we have passed through a long and gloomy portico of Latin and Greek, usually constitute the whole academic structure: and we stop at the very entrance upon useful and practical knowledge. Chymistry, botany, and the several other branches of natural history—the philosophy of husbandry and the mechanic arts—are commonly regarded as useless or impracticable attainments. I don't know that any professorship has ever been established for the purposes last mentioned; nor have I seen any books, that seem to have been written with the view to conducting youth through the several branches of such a study. Chymistry and botany are usually neglected as subjects of no importance, unless by accident to the medical tribe: and a general acquaintance with animate and inanimate nature has not been considered in our schools as an object of pursuit. The philosophy of the mechanic arts has not been systematically treated; in other words, the chymical principles, which avail in the operations of different artists, have not been explained and applied. The late dr. Lewis seems to have had this object in view when he began his *Commercium Philosophico-technicum*. He gave the history of gold, silver, and platina for the benefit of artists who work in those metals; but he went little farther. There was a large field before him, and he must have become voluminous or less minute. We find occasional remarks, or detached essays, on farming, malting, brewing, distilling, dying, tanning, baking, and other arts; but these subjects in general are not treated scientifically: for the writers have not been chymists.

(To be continued.)



Letter from dr. Franklin, to John Alleyne, esquire.

Dear Jack,

YOU desire, you say, my impartial thoughts on the subject of an early marriage, by way of answer to the numberless objections that have been

made by numerous persons to your own. You may remember, when you consulted me on the occasion, that I thought youth on both sides to be no objection. Indeed, from the marriages which have fallen under my observation, I am rather inclined to think, that early ones stand the best chance for happiness. The tempers and habits of the young are not yet become so stiff and uncomplying, as when more advanced in life; they form more easily to each other; and hence many occasions of disgust are removed. And if youth has less of that prudence, which is necessary to manage a family—yet the parents and elder friends of young married persons are generally at hand, to afford their advice, which amply supplies that defect: and by early marriage, youth is sooner formed to regular and useful life; and possibly some of those accidents or connexions, that might have injured the constitution, or reputation, or both, are thereby happily prevented. Particular circumstances, of particular persons, may possibly sometimes make it prudent to delay entering into that state; but in general when nature has rendered our bodies fit for it, the presumption is in nature's favour, that she has not judged amiss in making us desire it. Late marriages are often attended, too, with this further inconvenience, that there is not the same chance, that the parents shall live to see their offspring educated. "Late children," says the Spanish proverb, "are early orphans;" a melancholy reflection to those whose case it may be! With us in America, marriages are generally in the morning of our life; our children are therefore educated and settled in the world by noon; and thus our business being done, we have an afternoon and evening of cheerful leisure to ourselves, such as our friend at present enjoys. By these early marriages, we are blest with more children; and, from the mode among us, founded by nature, of every mother suckling and nursing her own child, more of them are raised. Thence the swift progress of population among us, unparalleled in Europe. In fine, I am glad you are



THE
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—♦♦—○○○○—♦♦—

O R I G I N A L P R O S E .

MESS. PRINTERS,

MY husband is a subscriber for your Museum, and I am fond of reading it—therefore, by your indulgence, I should be glad to give the public a little of my chat upon the article of visiting.

I suppose you will wish to know who I am; and therefore shall tell you that I am a lady past the meridian of life; and have been engaged as much as any body, in the business of receiving and returning visits—in the morning, afternoon, and evening—in town and out of town—half days, and whole days, two days, three days, a week, and a month at a time: and from a long course of observation and experience, I must lay it down as a maxim, that the true art of visiting, lies in pleasing and being pleased; or, if this cannot be, in endeavouring to please, and in seeming to be pleased. True genuine good nature is the best rule to direct persons how to make visits agreeable; but where that is wanting, politeness will do much toward supplying its place: and even where good nature is found, politeness helps much to set it off; for how much

more agreeable is the behaviour of two or three well-bred misses, at their needles, or over a cup of tea, than the romping and bawling of as many buxom lasses, without any more breeding than geese or parrets?

That good nature, or its substitute, politeness, is absolutely necessary to the pleasure of a visit, I think will never be questioned, by any who have been in company with two ladies of my acquaintance, whose characters and manner of behaviour are in many respects a contrast to each other. I shall describe them both.

Letitia has been married about ten years; and has a pretty parcel of children round her, who, by her admirable management, greatly contribute to heighten the pleasure of her visitants. She is a lady of perfect good nature, easy, free, and genteel. She receives you with a smile, that speaks a more pleasing language, than the brightest compliment from the most practised courtier; and is unaffectedly glad to see you; which she expresses, not in a multitude of words, but in all the gentleness and delicacy of true benevolence.

customs, which relate to our common transactions in life. Those, therefore, who depart from them, may, in some measure, be considered as disturbers of the tranquility of other people.

Some persons are too apt to refine in their ideas of following the dictates of sound judgment. They will say, that no wise man will trouble himself to pursue any custom, however public it may be, unless some reason can specially be offered in its favour. This rule should be reversed: and in all indifferent matters, one should follow the fashion, unless some special reason can be alleged against it.

To differ from the rest of mankind, in any immaterial thing, may indicate more pride or ill humour than others possess: but it is no mark of superior

understanding. There must be a degree of indiscretion in every instance of singularity, that does not originate in duty or convenience. I even question, whether a man is not under obligations to fall in with, or, at any rate, not to oppose, the established customs of society, unless he believe them unreasonable or inconvenient. This probably will never be the case: for I doubt whether the prevailing taste and feelings of the community may be looked upon as altogether arbitrary and capricious. When any custom predominates, for a considerable length of time, it is a tolerable evidence, that there is some foundation in reason for its existence; though perhaps the real advantages of it may not be perceived or acknowledged.

New York, July 8, 1789.



M I S C E L L A N I E S.

Essay on the influence of religion, in civil Society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church at Salem, S. C.—page 33.

NUMBER III.

THERE can be no precise and fixed rule laid down, for the regulation of men's conduct with respect to duties of imperfect obligation,

Of all the imperfect rights, gratitude approaches nearest to those, which are of complete obligation. None, of all those duties which cannot be properly exacted by law, admits of such accurate and determinate rules: but although the crime of ingratitude may be more easily ascertained, than any other of the same class, the slightest consideration will convince us, that no law can be framed, for the punishment of it, which will not be loose, vague, and liable to a thousand exceptions. And if this be the case with ingratitude, much more with the others. We may therefore conclude, without hesitation, that human laws cannot enforce the duties of imperfect obligation. Now, although the violation of these duties may not so directly tend to the dissolution of society, nor bring on such rapid destruction, as the neglect of those, which are called perfect

rights, it is clear, that it must gradually sap the foundations of government, and destroy that union and concord so necessary to its well-being. If then civil laws, by their proper power, cannot provide for the observance of the duties which are of such great moment to society, it must be acknowledged a great deficiency. Thus it appears, that civil society totally wants one of those sanctions, which have been always reckoned its two grand pillars; and can apply the other only in a very limited degree. An eminent writer hath asserted, "that civil society, by its own proper power, cannot provide for above one-third of the moral duties." I have not made the calculation; but believe he is near the truth. And we may add, that it can provide for these few but very imperfectly. Let us now enquire how religion supplies these deficiencies.

One of the most natural and obvious notions of the Deity, is, that he abhors vice and delights in virtue; will punish the one, and reward the other. They, who firmly believe, and properly attend to, this important religious truth, must, without doubt, be greatly influenced by it. When they call to mind, that they are accountable creatures, and

must be happy or miserable hereafter, according as they behave themselves here, this will doubtless be a powerful motive to shun vice, and pursue virtue. Religion holds up to all her sincere votaries, a reward, than which nothing can be greater, more noble, and better suited to influence the mind. The prospect of an happiness, the most exalted in its nature, the most exquisite in degree, and eternal in duration, must strongly allure those, to whom the desire of happiness is natural. Such, in the opinion of some of the wisest and best of the heathens, is that felicity, which awaits the virtuous man after death. This is the reward which religion promises, and which the good man expects to enjoy, as the recompense of his virtue and piety.

Without determining, whether the hope of reward, or the dread of punishment, most influences the actions of men, in general, we may safely affirm, that, on minds of a particular cast, the former works much more powerfully than the latter. Men of great and haughty souls—of elevated and daring spirits—revolt against every thing that wears the appearance of compulsion. They scorn to be overawed, by the fear of punishment; and consider it as a motive fit only to operate upon little minds, and timorous spirits. The dread of civil laws, and even the terrors of religion, can have but little effect upon such men: but they may be easily wrought upon, by the prospect of a reward, suited to the greatness of their minds. The religionist, though he may not be prompted to yield obedience to the wise and salutary laws of his country, by the hope of a reward from his fellow-citizens, expects ample retribution, from him who knows the sincerity and uprightness of his conduct. He looks for no reward from man; but expects it from him who is the rewarder of all those who walk in the paths of virtue. As the laws, in every well-constituted and wisely-governed state, will, as far as they reach, ever coincide with the eternal laws of the Deity, he will pay a religious regard to them, not only as ratified by the authority of government,

but as bearing the stamp, and being the sovereign mandates of the supreme lord of all*. Deeply impressed with this awful sanction of the Deity—powerfully influenced by the hope of that reward, which is the consequence of obedience to his laws—he will practise justice in all its various branches. This important virtue is the proper object of laws, both human and divine; and absolutely necessary, not only to the welfare, but also to the very existence, of civil government. Even a society of robbers, according to a trite observation, cannot subsist without some degree of it. Whatsoever, therefore, hath a tendency to lead men to the practice of this cardinal virtue, must be peculiarly advantageous to civil society. Now, certainly, the man who acts under the influence of religious motives and principles—who considers the laws of justice as the laws of God, who, he believes, will reward him for obedience, and punish him for disobedience—is more likely to practise justice, than one who is influenced only by human authority, and the terror of human laws, which he can often evade, and so escape unpunished. It is easy to determine which of these will be most faithful to his trust, most honest and upright in his dealings, most careful to shun every thing that may be injurious to his neighbour, in person, character, or property.

NOTE.

* “Human laws are measures in respect of men, whose actions they must direct, how-be-it such measures they are, as have also their higher rules to be measured by, which rules are two, the law of God, and the law of nature: so that laws human must be made according to the general laws of nature, and without contradiction to any positive law of scripture; otherwise they are ill made.” *Hooker*.

This was also the opinion of Mr. Locke, who quotes this very passage of Hooker, in his treatise on government. If some of our laws were brought to this test, I think they would be found not exactly agreeable to these two rules—and therefore not good.

But further : religion will not only lead those, who are influenced by it, to the exercise of justice, in its various branches ; but will induce them to the exact performance of all those duties of imperfect obligation, which human laws cannot enforce. The civil magistrate takes no notice of these ; and can neither reward the performance, nor punish the neglect of them ; but the laws of God extend to them ; and religion as strongly exacts them as the duties of perfect obligation. The religious man considers them as truly binding, as the most obvious dictates of justice. He as much expects to be rewarded for the one, as the other. This will lead him to pay the most sacred regard to the duties of gratitude, humanity, hospitality, charity—in a word, to all those kind and beneficent offices, which are so essentially necessary to the welfare of the community : though they are not, and indeed cannot be, the proper objects of human laws. We think it unnecessary to enlarge upon the duties just now mentioned, by shewing how much the careful performance of them tends to strengthen and confirm the social union. The slightest consideration will immediately convince us, of what vast importance they are to society, and how much they promote peace, love, harmony, and consequently felicity, in the social state. We need only conceive what would be the consequence of the total neglect of these duties, to be fully convinced of their utility. What a shocking and deplorable scene of malice, hatred, strife, cruelty, misery, and distraction, opens upon the mind, on the bare supposition ! And yet civil society, as hath been observed, cannot enforce these duties, the practice of which is so necessary to its happiness, and the neglect of which endangers its very existence. If then, religion enforce these duties, and lead men to the performance of them, it will certainly follow, that it is useful to the state. Thus religion, like a powerful ally, comes in to the aid of civil government ; and, by establishing the sanction of reward, which it wholly wants, supplies its defects.

NUMBER IV.

IN order more fully to demonstrate how religion supplies the defects of civil society, let it be observed, that it not only furnishes the sanction of reward, which it so much needs, but also superadds a new sanction of punishment, which co-operates with, and gives additional energy to human laws. The reader will please to remember, that we have already shewn, that civil society can apply the sanction of punishment, only in a very low and limited degree.

Some crimes are secret, and cannot be punished by civil laws ; because they lie wholly beyond their reach. Others are of such a nature, that the severe punishment of them opens an avenue to those of a more atrocious nature. But this is not the case with the sanction of punishment, which religion establishes. It applies to all crimes whatsoever, let their nature or circumstances be what they may. Men may escape the punishment, which civil society decrees, by concealing their crimes : but they cannot thus elude that, which religion holds out, to all those who violate her laws. Those, who believe that God governs the world in wisdom and righteousness, and that his providence extends to all his creatures, must also believe, that he is omniscient, and, of consequence, perfectly acquainted with all their actions and intentions. All who have a firm persuasion and proper impression of this great religious truth, will be sensible, how vain it is to attempt to cover their crimes from him, whose all-seeing eye penetrates the inmost recesses of their hearts. Religion teaches, that all the transgressions of the wicked, though they may escape the observation of men, lie open to the Deity, whose " eyes are like a flame of fire ;" and who will, in due time, inflict that punishment which they justly deserve. As the prospect of impunity invites men to evil—so the certainty of punishment tends to restrain them from it, especially if the punishment be unspeakably great and dreadful. And such, both christians and heathens are agreed, will be the punishment of

vice in a future life. If, then, the dread of a punishment, certain, terrible, and everlasting, can have any influence on the minds of men, religion must be a powerful restraint, not only from open, but secret crimes. Where crimes are secret, or of such a nature as not to be cognizable by human judicatures, the sanction of civil laws ceases to operate; and is no longer of any service to restrain from transgression. Here religion comes in most opportunely to the assistance of civil society, by impressing the idea of a future state, an omniscient tribunal, and a punishment, which the guilty cannot possibly avoid. On the other hand, where the crime is open, and liable to be punished by human laws, the sanction of religion falls in with, and strengthens that of human laws, by holding out a punishment much more certain, as well as more formidable, than man can inflict.

Men may be guilty of the blackest ingratitude, and, in general, totally neglect the duties of imperfect obligation, without incurring the least danger from the civil powers. But although civil government ordains no penalties in this case, religion does; and thus furnishes a remedy for that material defect. The man, who lives under the belief and impression of religion, looks upon himself accountable at the bar of the omniscient, for the neglect of those duties. Though he be under no terror from the laws of men, he fears that future vengeance, which awaits the guilty beyond the grave.

But it may be objected against the above reasoning—that religion is not so useful and necessary as hath been represented; that though civil society labours under great deficiencies, there are other ways by which they may be supplied. It may be said, that the regard, which men have to their own interest, their own temporal happiness and security, will naturally lead them to pay a strict regard to the laws of society, and also to perform those duties which laws cannot enforce, as well as to avoid those crimes which they cannot punish; that the happiness of every

individual in society is involved with, and depends upon, the happiness of the whole; that every one may see, that, without obedience to good and wholesome laws, government must be rent into pieces, and he himself share in the common ruin; and further, that the omission, even of those duties, which civil laws do not require, and the commission of those crimes, which they cannot punish, must be injurious to the welfare of the state, and consequently to his own happiness; therefore a regard to his own interest, and temporal prosperity, must induce him to perform those duties, and shun those crimes.

To all which, we beg leave to reply:—that it may be readily granted, without any disadvantage to the argument, that the considerations mentioned, will have their weight with a few in every society; but, it would betray no small ignorance of human nature to suppose, that those things have any considerable influence on the bulk of mankind. They think but little of such matters. They are not disposed to attend to such far-fetched deductions, nor to refine even thus far. Such kind of reasonings, though obvious enough to those who have attended to the nature and influence of civil society, to them appears not a little intricate and perplexed. There is not, perhaps, a people on the face of the earth, more enlightened in the nature of civil government, than the Americans: and yet I suppose it may be modestly affirmed, that by far the greater part of them reflect but little, how society procures those blessings which they enjoy, because they are not immediately and directly the consequence of it. The gross of the common people are too much occupied about other matters, to examine remote consequences, or trace their present happy and flourishing circumstances to so distant a source, as civil society. They generally attribute these to their own prudence, industry, and address, without looking any further. For the most part, they are pursuing their own private and separate interest, little solicitous about the public good, though they

may at the same time be promoting it. They seldom reflect, that they are a part of a whole, with which they are obliged to stand or fall; or consider, that their happiness depends upon that of the community, of which they are members. Men, who are immured in their studies, and conversant chiefly with books, may wonder how people can be ignorant of these things: but let them travel through our country, and converse with those of the lower rank, who make the bulk in every government, and they will find great numbers, and those not the worst citizens, much like the simple Hibernian, who, when he was informed the ship was sinking, made this reply: "what do I care? I am only a passenger." In order, therefore, that the gross of the people may discharge their duty as good citizens, some more obvious and immediate motive is necessary to supply the imperfection of civil laws—some principle of action, which comes more directly home to them, and affects them more immediately, as individuals. Such is that of religion, which teaches, that the virtuous shall be rewarded, and the vicious punished, in a future state. This leading principle, which seems in a great measure natural to the mind of man, will have a much greater influence on the generality of mankind, and do more to supply the defects of civil society, than all the reasonings in the world, which, though they may be just, are but little attended to by most men.

The whole of what is urged in the objection, under the notion of motive, may be resolved into the principle of self-love; which, when duly modified, properly directed, and wisely regulated, is, no doubt, favourable to civil government. But who does not see, that the love of self, is almost always inordinate, in the pursuit of present good, and frequently, by a blind and furious impulse to present gratification, breaks through all the fences of law, and leads men to all manner of violence and injustice? Indeed, to counteract and restrain the excess of this passion, and correct the evils, which arise from it,

is the very design of the civil compact. Government attempts to effect these purposes, by laying hold on this same principle—the strongest in human nature—and endeavouring to prevent its ill effects, by giving it an opposite direction. This it can do but very imperfectly by its own proper power; and therefore stands in need of aid, from some other quarter. Here religion affords the necessary assistance; for by inculcating a future retribution—and thus exciting the hopes and the fears of men—the opposes self-love to self-love. My meaning is, that she opposes the love of self—as desiring future good, and shunning future evil—to the love of self, considered as pursuing the unlawful gratification of present irregular appetite. The language of civil laws is, "if you transgress, through an inordinate love of self, you shall be punished:" which very threatening is an application to the selfish principle, self-love always leading men to avoid that, which they reckon in its nature evil. The language of religion is "if you carefully observe the wise and salutary laws of your country, and faithfully discharge the duties of a good citizen, you shall have an ample reward: but if, hurried away by the impulse of selfish passions, you violate the laws, and invade the rights of your fellow-citizens, the most dreadful punishment awaits you." It is easy to see how far the language of both coincides. They only differ in this, that the one reaches further than the other. The one denounces punishment; but promises no reward: the other not only promises a reward, but threatens a more dreadful punishment. Civil laws lay hold, more especially, on men's fears; religion both on their hopes and their fears. Both address themselves to the selfish passions: both oppose self-love to self-love, in the sense already explained.

But grant all that is supposed in the objection, it will by no means overthrow our argument. We have no where asserted, that there are no other principles in human nature, besides religion, which tend in any degree to remedy the imper-

perfections of society; but only, that religion is the most proper and natural remedy. Whatever may anywise serve as a foundation of moral obligation—if, indeed, there can be any such foundation, distinct from the will of the supreme—as the moral sense, the essential difference of things—these, as far as they lead men to approve and practise virtue, and shun vice, tend to promote the happiness of society. If a principle of honour and shame, a regard to character, and dread of contempt and disgrace, induce men to virtuous actions; and restrain them from the contrary, they must be considered as contributing, in some degree, to supply the defects of civil laws. I am, however, persuaded, that, upon a careful examination, these will be found not to have all that influence some may imagine. They are not a little precarious; and depend much upon time, place, education, custom, and fashion. What is reckoned honourable at one time and place, is not reckoned so at another. Custom and fashion, which exercise a kind of despotism over us, in matters of less consequence, introduce very considerable changes, even in moral sentiments and conduct. That rigid virtue and austerity of manners, which so strongly marked the rise of the Roman republic, would have appeared ridiculous and contemptible, when that empire began to decline. That style of manners, which was reckoned honourable, and procured the highest veneration, in Cromwel's time, was the object of scorn and derision, under the voluptuous reign of the second Charles. Custom hath reconciled many of the Carolinians and Georgians to a treatment of their slaves, which a Pennsylvanian looks upon with horror. It is a custom among some savage nations, to expose infants: and the practice prevailed amongst the Athenians, and several other Grecian states, though civilized in a very high degree. And to increase our wonder, it was defended and inculcated by their greatest philosophers. We look upon this custom with the utmost abhorrence: we consider it as the highest pitch of barbarity, and the most shocking violation

of the laws of nature and humanity: but among them, it was no way disgraceful, and past without blame or censure. After all, from the instances given above, we must not conclude, as some have done, that there is no other difference in moral actions and sentiments, than that which arises from education, custom, or opinion. The foundations of morality are more deep and stable, than to be overthrown so easily as such men imagine. There are some actions and characters, to which no education or custom whatever can reconcile men. Custom can never bring us to approve of ingratitude and treachery; and to esteem them equally honourable and worthy of praise with gratitude and fidelity. Because men in some particular instances, through the influence of custom or education, act contrarily to what we reckon the plain rules of morality, it will not follow that these rules have no other foundation. This would prove too much: for by the same method of arguing, we might prove, that there is no such thing as a principle of reason in men; because in millions of instances, custom and education lead them to act contrarily to its plain dictates. Let the moral sense, the essential difference, the principles of honour and shame, have all the weight which can with any show of reason be allowed them, enough will still be left for religion. With all the assistance which these can afford, human laws will be found but a weak fence against the violence and injustice of men.

(To be continued.)



Letter from dr. Franklin to the late dr. Mather, of Boston.

REV. SIR,

I RECEIVED your kind letter, with your excellent advice to the people of the united states, which I read with great pleasure; and hope it will be duly regarded. Such writings, though they may be lightly passed over by many readers, yet, if they make a deep impression on one active mind in a hundred, the effects may be considerable.



THE
A M E R I C A N M U S E U M,
 Or, UNIVERSAL MAGAZINE,
 For MARCH, 1790.

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Years.	Ships.	Imports.	Exports.
Brought forward	421	854	116,381
1766	43	10208	672
1767	19	3248	375
1768	27	5950	485
1769	29	3575	420
1770	25	6824	836
1771	17	4183	671
1772	22	3278	923
1773	49	9676	800
1774		28448	2511
1775		16945	572
1776		29231	1343
1777		5255	492
1778		5674	734
		<u>535,549</u>	<u>132,115</u>

	Population of Maryland.—1787	
	Whites.	Blacks.
St. Mary's co.	2,459	6,246
Charles,	9,804	7,920
Calvert,	4,012	3,598
Kent,	6,165	4,261
Talbot,	6,744	4,150
Cecil,	7,749	2,634
Queen-Anne,	7,767	5,958
Anne-Arundel,	9,370	8,711
Prince-George,	9,864	8,746
Baltimore,	17,878	5,472
Hartford,	9,377	3,041
Somerset,	7,787	5,958
Dorchester,	8,927	4,575
Worcester,	2,561	3,473
Caroline,	6,230	2,698
Frederic,	20,495	2,262
Washington,	11,448	885
Montgomery,	10,011	4,407
	<u>170,688</u>	<u>83,985</u>

Exports from Charleston, S. C. of the crops of 1782 and 1783:

	1782.	1783.
Barrels of rice,	23,160	58,923
Half barrels,	2,129	6,102
Casks indigo,	827	2,051
Hogheads tobacco,	643	2,680
Hhds. & bales deer skins,	101	651
Barrels pitch,	565	4,877
Barrels tar,	540	2,489
Barrels turpentine,	936	7,331
M. feet lumber,	251	705
M. shingles	215	1,072
Staves,	12,900	402,100
Bushels Indian corn,	6,645	14,080
Hides,		887
Sides leather,		2,703
Tons hemp,		3
Casks ginseng,		17
Casks flaxseed,		171
Reeds,		147,750

GEO. A. HALL, Collector.

Number of sea vessels which arrived in the port of New-York, in 1788.

Ships,	110
Brigs,	198
Snows,	9
Schooners,	184
Sloops,	451
	<u>952</u>

Essay on the influence of religion, in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church at salem, S. C.—Written in 1785.

NUMBER V.

EVERY judicious reader will have observed, that we have cautiously avoided to embroil ourselves in those disputes, which have been agitated concerning the foundation of moral obligation.

It is well known, that three different opinions have been advanced on this head: some founding it on the moral sense; others on the essential difference of things; and others on the will of God. Strictly speaking, perhaps this last, only, can properly oblige men. But in order to maintain this, it is not necessary to exclude the other two from all influence on morality. Where is the absurdity of allowing all three a share in leading men to the practice of virtue? without determining any thing positively concerning this matter, we have endeavoured to prove, that religion cannot be considered as unnecessary, even on the principles of those who are most strongly attached to the moral sense, and the essential difference. These two have, indeed, of late, been the

hobby-horses of their respective patrons. They make the principal figure in the writings of most of our modern moralists, not to say divines. The will of God, or what comes nearly to the same thing, religion, which is indeed the only proper and stable foundation of morality, is either wholly excluded, or brought in only by-the-bye, as a matter of little or no consequence. These fine-spun systems, however much they may display the ingenuity of their authors, have but very little tendency to promote virtue, and reform the manners of the people: and therefore can be of little service to society. It is not easy to see how the moral sense, or the essential difference, or both taken together, when considered as wholly distinct from religion, if indeed they can be so considered; can properly establish the sanction of future reward and punishment. This, we have shewn, is of the greatest moment to civil government: and hence arises the singular utility of religion.

The abstract beauty of virtue may operate upon profound reasoners. That pleasure, which arises from those actions, which the moral sense approves, may have its weight with men of elegant minds and delicate sentiments. But neither of them will have much effect upon the great body of mankind. They will be always found to operate but very faintly upon the many, who have, generally, "quick senses, strong passions, and gross intellects." This single observation shews of how little consequence they are, when compared with religion, which is calculated to operate upon the bulk of the common people in every society, as well as upon the learned and refined part of mankind.

Upon the whole, though we should grant that other things co-operate with religion, in supplying the defects of civil society; we need not fear to conclude, that this is the most proper, and, at the same time, the most powerful remedy.

Before we conclude this part, it will be necessary to add a few words, concerning the use of oaths, which may be considered as a distinct argument,

to prove the influence of religion on civil society. Solemn oaths, as far as I can learn, have obtained in all civilized nations. It is well known what amazing force and influence they had upon the Romans, in the virtuous period of their republic. In the greatest extremity, and most pressing dangers, these were their dernier resort. We have instances enow of this in their history. Let one suffice in this place: after the battle of Cannæ, the people were struck with such a panic, that they talked of removing to Sicily. But Scipio had the address to obtain an oath from them, that they would not leave Rome. The dread of violating this oath overwhelmed all other apprehensions. "Rome," says the excellent Montesquieu, "was a ship held by two anchors, religion and morality, in the midst of a furious tempest."

If Mr. Locke, and the American politicians, argue justly, all legitimate government is originally founded on compact. This compact is usually ratified by solemn oaths. The chief magistrate, who is invested with the supreme executive power, is bound by oath, faithfully and impartially to execute the laws, and govern agreeably to them. In like manner, every citizen is bound to aid and support him, as far as he acts conformably to his solemn engagement. Among us, it is well known, that all civil officers, from the governor down to the constable, are obliged, by oath, to the discharge of their respective trusts. The policy and even necessity of this, is very obvious: for although our civil officers are amenable for their conduct, and liable to be punished upon conviction, this can be no security against clandestine fraud. Hence the religion of an oath is necessary, to restrain them from those secret mal-practices, which, however injurious to the public, cannot be legally detected. The security of life and property depends, in a great measure, upon oaths. The innocent cannot be absolved, nor the guilty punished, without them. In the most important judicial proceedings, the verdict ultimately rests upon their validity. Take away the use of these religious affirma-

tions, and our courts of judicature must cease, or be almost entirely useless. In a word, civil government can by no means be carried on without them. If oaths be thus necessary to the administration of government, religion must be so: for where there is no religion, there can be no oath. Take away the belief of a deity, a providence, and a future state, and there is an end of all oaths at once. In every oath, a deity is invoked, as a witness and avenger, if we deviate from the truth. The atheist, therefore, cannot be bound by it. He, who believes there is no providence or future state, can be in no dread of punishment, either in this or a coming world, if he can only elude human judicatures. The greatest freethinker, or most abandoned profligate in our country, would place very little dependence on the oath of one who believes there is neither God nor devil, heaven nor hell. Civil laws do, indeed, hold out a severe punishment to deter men from perjury: but as it is one of those crimes, of which a person can seldom be legally convicted, such laws strike but little terror, and are of very little service. The perjured villain may repeat his crime an hundred times, without any danger from human laws. If, therefore, the laws of religion have no hold upon him, his oath is perfectly insignificant—especially, where he is under temptation to depart from the truth. We may, therefore, venture to affirm, that the obligation of oaths is properly founded on religion; and that whatever weight we allow them, above a simple affirmation, arises from a supposition, that the deponent believes there is a God—the rewarder of truth and the avenger of perjury, to whom he makes a solemn appeal. This single consideration, were there no other arguments, is sufficient to evince the utility, and even the necessity, of religion to civil society. For if government cannot be carried on without the use of oaths, and the validity of these depend upon religion, the consequence is unavoidable, that civil society cannot subsist without religion.

(To be continued.)

Extract from an oration, delivered July 4, 1789, at the presbyterian church, in Arch-street, Philadelphia, by the rev. William Rogers, A. M. professor of English and oratory, in the college and academy of Philadelphia.

THE objects of this day's commemoration naturally inspire the mind with sentiments of admiration and delight!—not such sentiments as prevail where ancient usage or capricious fashion has prescribed the festival, in honour of some visionary saint or pampered monarch: but such as invigorate the contemplative mind, and give new splendor to the human character:—

It is the Sabbath of our freedom!—Every friend of science, every lover of mankind, is interested in the event which IT records; for, even at this early period, the animating rays of our new constellation have been felt on the exhausted soil of Europe, and have penetrated the barbarous shades of Africa!

Governments have been overthrown by violence, or undermined by treachery; the standard of liberty has been violated by the hand of despotism; and the dominion of the world has been fluctuating and precarious: but in the long catalogue of sublunary vicissitudes, no parallel can be found, similar to that which we are now called upon to celebrate.

The causes and effects of national revolutions have generally been disproportionate. The wanton violence of one individual, was the ground of changing the monarchy of Rome into a republic: and that republic was eventually subverted by the polished ambition of another. Caprice influenced the people, as ambition urged their leaders. The motive, and the means of every enterprize, were held to be equally justified by the end: and thus, however magnificent the superstructures have appeared, the foundations of ancient power were seldom the work of reason and of justice.

To these illustrations, the history of modern times has added the force of religious bigotry upon the uncultivated mind:—and, perhaps, the nation, whose

X



T H E
A M E R I C A N M U S E U M,
 Or, UNIVERSAL MAGAZINE,
 For M A Y, 1790.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Should Palemon send his poetical effusions to us, *before* their appearance in the newspapers, they would be received with attention.

C. is requested to bestow a little more care on his communications.

A mechanic's hint shall be attended to.

The essay on the danger of losing classical and other learning in America—Apocryphal account of the first peopling of America, &c. are under consideration.

Anecdote respecting governor Belcher and parson Byles—Extract respecting the mermaid—instances of the use of torture in Scotland—Fabulous account of the prodigies attending the birth, infancy, and youth of Mahomet—Dalrymple's prophecy respecting the isthmus of Darien—Description of the floating gardens of Mexico—Remarks on the trade and government of Virginia—&c. &c. shall appear as soon as possible.

chafe was agreed, great promises past between us, of 'kindness and good neighbourhood, and that the Indians and English must live in love, as long as the sun gave light.' Which done, another made a speech to the Indians, in the name of all the sachamakers or kings; first to tell them what was done; next, to charge and command them, 'To love the christians, and particularly to live in peace with me, and the people under my government; that many governors had been in the river; but that no governor had come himself to live and stay here before; and having now such an one that had treated them well, they should never do him or his any wrong.' At every sentence of which they shouted, and said, Amen, in their way.

XXIV. The justice they have, is pecuniary. In case of any wrong or evil fact, be it murder itself, they atone by feasts and presents of their wampum, which is proportioned to the quality of the offence, or person injured, or of the sex they are of. For in case they kill a woman, they pay double, and the reason they render, is, 'That she breedeth children, which men cannot do.' It is rare that they fall out, if sober: and if drunk, they forgive it, saying, 'It was the drink, and not the man, that abused them.'

XXV. We have agreed, that in all differences between us, fix of each side shall end the matter. Do not abuse them, but let them have justice, and you win them. The worst is, they are the worse for the christians, who have propagated their vices, and yielded them tradition for ill, and not for good things. But as low an ebb as these people are at, and as glorious as their own condition looks, the christians have not outlived their sight, with all their pretensions to an higher manifestation. What good then might not a good people graft, where there is so distinct a knowledge left between good and evil? I beseech God to incline the hearts of all that come into these parts, to outlive the knowledge of the natives, by a fixt obedience to their greater knowledge of

the will of God; for it were miserable indeed for us to fall under the censure of the poor Indian conscience, while we make profession of things so far transcending.

XXVI. For their original, I am ready to believe them of the Jewish race: I mean, of the stock of the ten tribes, and that for the following reasons; first, they were to go to "a land not planted or known," which, to be sure, Asia and Africa were, if not Europe: and he, who intended that extraordinary judgment upon them, might make the passage not uneasy to them, as it is not impossible in itself, from the easternmost parts of Asia, to the westernmost parts of America. In the next place I find them of like countenance, and their children of so lively resemblance, that a man would think himself in Duke's-place, or Berry-street in London, when he seeth them. But this is not all: they agree in rites: they reckon by moons: they offer their first fruits: they have a kind of feast of tabernacles: they are said to lay their altar upon twelve stones: their mourning a year, customs of women, with many things that do not now occur. So much for the natives; next the old planters will be considered in this relation, before I come to our colony, and the concerns of it.

(To be concluded in our next.)



Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church at Salem, S. C. written in 1785.—Page 161.

NUMBER VI.

WE proceed to the second head of argument. "If truth and utility coincide, or, to speak more plainly, if truth be productive of utility, and utility indicative of truth," christianity must be, of all religions, the most useful to civil society. Ancient politicians and philosophers held, that "many things in religion are true, which are not useful, and *vice versa*." Some moderns, illustrious for their political writings, have adopted the same opinion, at

least in part. The celebrated Montesquieu, speaking of certain religious opinions, which were taught among the Persians, subjoins: "The doctrines were false, but extremely useful." And in several other places, he supposes, that doctrines, in themselves false, may be productive of much utility in government. Beccaria, an author whom I revere, and whose very errors appear amiable, because he pleads the cause of humanity, hath the following extraordinary passage. "The first religious errors, which peopled the earth with false divinities, and created a world of invisible beings, to govern the visible creation, were of the utmost service to mankind. The greatest benefactors to humanity were those who dared to deceive and lead pliant ignorance to the foot of the altar."

If this author mean, that a religion, though blended with much error and superstition, is better for civil society, than none, I agree with him: but if he mean, as his words seem plainly to import, that the invention or propagation of falsehoods, or that religious errors, in doctrine or worship, have a tendency to promote the happiness of mankind, in a state of society, I take the liberty to differ from him. I cannot persuade myself, that religious, or political, or even military lies, can be, upon the whole, useful to mankind, or even to a particular society. "Honesty is the best policy." The propagation of falsehoods may sometimes be attended with a partial, particular, private, or temporary utility, but can never be upon the whole advantageous. The good, arising from them, is generally more than counterbalanced by the mischief they do, in destroying mutual confidence among men. To suppose otherwise, is plainly to level truth with falsehood: for if truth be more excellent than falsehood, as is generally acknowledged, that superior excellence must lie in its utility, or tendency to promote human happiness. Suppose falsehood to have the same general tendency, and, I think, it will be hard to give a reason, why we should prefer the former to the

latter. When we give it as our opinion, that the religion of the heathens was of real service to civil government, we do not suppose, that their religious errors—their false notions concerning certain invisible powers—their idolatry and superstition—produced that utility; but the substantial truths involved with those falsehoods. Those important religious truths, which were of general belief in all well-policed states, and not the mighty mass of superstition with which they were interwoven, were useful to the state. Thus, when some sovereign drug is combined with others of useless, or somewhat pernicious quality, a salutary effect may be produced: but that effect is not to be attributed to the useless or baneful qualities of the latter, but the salutary efficacy of the former. Idolatry, superstition, and religious falsehoods, are not only useless, but pernicious to civil society; and tend to alloy that good, of which religious truth is productive. On a critical view of the history of those civil societies which have existed in the world, it will be found, that, *ceteris paribus*, those have enjoyed the greatest share of political happiness, whose religions have been least mingled with superstition. It is religious truth, therefore, and not religious lies, which we suppose useful to civil government. The christian religion therefore, in its native purity and simplicity, as taught by its first founders, and unadulterated with those superstitious mixtures which have deformed its beauty, and counteracted its salutary influence, must be, of all religions, the most favourable to civil society.

"Mr. Bayle," says the illustrious Montesquieu, "after having abused all religions, endeavours to sully christianity: he boldly asserts, that true christians cannot form a government of any duration. Why not?" replies the baron. "Citizens of this sort being infinitely enlightened with respect to the various duties of life, and having the warmest zeal to perform them, must be perfectly sensible of the rights of natural defence. The more they believe themselves indebted to religion, the more

they would think due to their country. The principles of christianity, deeply engraven on the heart, would be infinitely more powerful than the false honour of monarchies, than the humane virtues of republics, or the servile fear of despotic states."

This is a noble testimony in favour of christianity, from one who thought for himself, and who made the nature of government and laws, the principal study of his life.

In order to shew the influence of the christian religion on civil society, it will be necessary to consider—the doctrines it teaches—the worship it enjoins—and the precepts it inculcates. The two first shall be treated briefly: the last requires a more ample discussion.

I. Of the doctrines which christianity teaches.

Under this head it will not be necessary to treat all the doctrines of our religion, but merely those which more immediately and directly tend to the benefit of society. Such are those concerning the nature of the Deity, his providence, and a future state of rewards and punishments.

In those sacred writings which contain our religion, we have such a representation of the nature and attributes of the great first cause, as gives us the most grand, noble, and worthy conceptions of him. The divine character, as there drawn, is suited to inspire ideas at once the most august and awful, the most venerable and lovely. His irresistible power, inflexible justice, and tremendous majesty—his infinite knowledge and immaculate purity—tend to fill us with the most profound awe and reverence; to deter us from every thing, which might provoke him; and consequently to restrain us from every kind of immorality. These perfections of the Deity leave the impenitent and persisting rebel no hope of escaping the righteous vengeance of heaven. His diffusive benevolence, the riches of his goodness, the extent of his mercy, his patience and readiness to pardon the repenting and returning sinner, are calculated to inspire us with sentiments of

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love and gratitude, encourage us to renounce our vicious practices, and hope in his mercy. In a word, the due consideration of his attributes, as represented in our religion, necessarily tends to restrain us from all vice, and excite us to walk in the paths of piety and virtue; and consequently to promote our happiness as social beings.

It must be confessed, even by those who are inclined to think most favourably of the ancient heathens, that, with few exceptions, they entertained very gross and unworthy notions of their deities; and such as plainly tended to corrupt their morals, and encourage them in an indulgence of the sensual passions, very pernicious to civil society. Their gods, as the poet well expresses it, were

"Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,

Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust."

The amorous intrigues, the rapes, quarrels, thefts, &c. for which they were celebrated, are justly reckoned scandalous among mortal men. There was scarcely any vice, the practice of which was not countenanced by some of their deities, male or female. Indeed when we consider the immoralities ascribed to the gods of the heathens, it is surprising they were not more corrupt and dissolute in their manners. There must have been some powerful antidote in their civil institutions, which counteracted the influence of religious errors, so destructive of all morality. The idea, which christianity gives us of the infinite purity of that God whom we worship, has a quite contrary tendency. In a word, the perfections of the Deity, held up to view in divine revelation, are such; that the serious consideration and devout contemplation of them, must necessarily fill us with an abhorrence of all impurity and vice of every kind. The more nearly we resemble him, and the more perfectly we imitate him, the more virtuous we are, and the more disposed to discharge all the social duties.

The doctrines, which christianity teaches, concerning the divine provi-
2 I.

dence, give us the most exalted conceptions of the Deity. They are perfectly consonant to, and indeed the necessary consequence of, his attributes. What a sublime idea do they give us of the great Jehovah, when we consider him as "ruling in the army of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of this lower world!"—exercising an absolute, supreme, and universal dominion over all his creatures—sustaining them by his power—directing them by his wisdom—and supplying them by his bounty? The God, whom we are taught to worship, is no local deity, like those of the heathens, presiding over this or that portion of nature—the guardian of this or that particular city or country—inhabiting this or that particular river, grove, or mountain. He fills the vast and complicated machine of the universe, touches every spring, moves every wheel, and adjusts every motion. He is the fountain not only of being, but of all operation—the source of all that beauty, order, and harmony, which are diffused over the wide creation, and fill the attentive beholder with such inexpressible delight. His providence extends to the least as well as the greatest of his works. None of his creatures, however insignificant, escape his notice: he regards them all with an equal and impartial eye. They are all the objects of his parental care—all the subjects of his governing power and wisdom. With what beauty and emphasis does the inspired poet set forth the exuberant goodness of the Creator, in the ample provision he makes for the various tribes of animals, which inhabit this spacious earth! "The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. The eyes of all wait upon thee: and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." But although his beneficence is extended to all his creatures, those, who devote themselves to his service, are the objects of his peculiar care. "The young lions may lack and suffer hunger: but those, who seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing. Their bread shall be given them;

their water shall be sure." He, who "feeds the young ravens, that cry, and clothes the grass of the field," will much more give his own servants food to eat, and raiment to put on.

When the devout christian contemplates the providence of God in this view, and considers all things as under the government, and at the sovereign disposal, of a being infinitely just, wise, and powerful, whose goodness, like an overflowing fountain, is continually diffusing its streams over the whole creation—and who hath pledged his truth, that "all things shall work together for his good"—it cannot fail to inspire confidence and tranquility, and afford him consolation under the heaviest calamities. He looks up to the bounty of his heavenly Father, who, with a benignant hand, pours out the blessings of his providence. In the use of the appointed means, he depends upon his parental care and munificence, nor dreads approaching poverty or want. Contented with that portion of temporal good things which providence hath allotted to him, he is not disposed to encroach upon the property of others, either by fraud or violence. Satisfied with the station, though humble, in which heaven hath fixed him, he envies not the rich, or the great, nor is anxious for change. With such a temper as this, he cannot fail of being an honest, quiet, and peaceable member of society. Such a disposition, especially in governments which enjoy a great share of liberty, is, perhaps, of more importance than is generally imagined. Discontentment with our present condition, envy of wealth and power, and an immoderate fondness of change, are the source of innumerable evils in society. At least, it is certain they were so in the republic of Rome, which was continually embroiled by the fierce disputes between the patricians and the plebeians. And, if I mistake not, much of the present uneasiness, strife, and political contention in America, may be traced to the same source. If every citizen, with a christian temper, would acquiesce in that wise plan of providence, which ordains a

certain subordination of rank and office in the political body—and consider that in this very thing the beauty, order, and even the excellence of society, very much consists, we would not have so many factious and turbulent spirits amongst us. We would not then see so many, who, prompted by ambitious and aspiring passions, are continually grasping after power, and wealth, and high stations, endeavouring to pull down all who are above, and oppress all below them. A just view of providence, as taught by our religion, would lead us to consider, that in every government, there must be high and low, rich and poor. This would make us easy and contented with the lot which heaven has assigned to us, and convince us, that in acting our part well, whether it be a high, or a low one, “all the honour lies.”

(To be continued.)



Letter on the effects of lead upon the human body. From dr. Franklin to a friend.

Philadelphia, July 31, 1786.

DEAR FRIEND,

I Recollect, that when I had the great pleasure of seeing you at Southampton, now a twelvemonth since, we had some conversation on the bad effects of lead taken inwardly; and that at your request I promised to send you in writing a particular account of several facts I then mentioned to you, of which you thought some good use might be made. I now sit down to fulfil that promise.

The first thing I remember of this kind, was a general discourse in Boston, when I was a boy, of a complaint from North Carolina, against New England rum, that it poisoned their people, giving them the dry-belly-ach, with a loss of the use of their limbs. The distilleries being examined on the occasion, it was found, that several of them used leaden still-heads and worms: and the physicians were of opinion that the mischief was occasioned by that use of lead. The legislature of Massachusetts there-

upon passed an act, prohibiting under severe penalties, the use of such still-heads and worms thereafter.

In 1724, being in London, I went to work in the printing house, of Mr. Palmer, Bartholomew-cloze, as a compositor. I there found a practice, I had never seen before, of drying a case of types, (which are wet in distribution) by placing it sloping before the fire. I found this had the additional advantage, (when the types were not only dried but heated) of being comfortable to the hands working over them in cold weather. I therefore sometimes heated my case when the types did not want drying. But an old workman observing it, advised me not to do so; telling me, I might lose the use of my hands by it, as two of our companions had nearly done; one of whom, who used to earn his guinea, a week, could not then make more than ten shillings; and the other, who had the dangles, but seven and sixpence. This, with a kind of obscure pain, that I had sometimes felt, as it were in the bones of my hand, when working over the types made very hot, induced me to omit the practice. But talking afterwards with Mr. James a letter-founder in the same cloze, and asking him, if his people, who worked over the little furnaces of melted metal, were not subject to that disorder—he made light of any danger from the effluvia; but ascribed it to particles of the metal, swallowed with their food, by slovenly workmen, who went to their meals, after handling the metal, without well washing their fingers, so that some of the metalline particles were taken off by their bread, and eaten with it. This appeared to have some reason in it. But the pain I had experienced, made me still afraid of those effluvia.

Being in Derbyshire, at some of the furnaces, for smelting of lead ore, I was told, that the smoke of those furnaces was pernicious to neighbouring grass and other vegetables: but I do not recollect to have heard any thing of the effect of such vegetables, eaten by animals. It may be well to make the enquiry.

In America, I have often observed,



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Law case. Common pleas, Philadelphia county, June term, 1788. Bokan vs. Martin. From Dallas's reports now in the press, and which will be published in a few days.

THE defendant was one of the members from Bedford county, in the state convention, which assembled, at Philadelphia, to take into consideration the adoption, or rejection, of the constitution proposed for the government of the united states, by the federal convention, on the 17th of September, 1787. During his attendance upon this duty, he was served with a summons, at the suit of the plaintiff; and Sergeant obtained a rule to shew cause, why the process should not be quashed, upon a suggestion, that the defendant, acting in this public capacity, was entitled to privilege?

The case was elaborately argued by Levy, for the plaintiff, and Sergeant and Bradford, for the defendant.

Levy represented the question to be, simply, whether a member of the state convention was protected, during the sessions of that body, from being served with a summons? He remarked, that there appeared to be a strong distinction between the privileges of a permanent legislature, and those which might be claimed by a convention, called for a temporary purpose: but, waving any argument arising from that source, he contended, that there was no similitude between the deliberative bodies of England and Pennsylvania; and that, consequently, the privilege of parliament in that country, was not capable of a strict application in this. The English constitution, consisting of three branches, was so constructed, as to prevent the encroachments of one branch upon another: and privilege, as allowed in England, was the necessary result of that principle. The privilege of the house of lords, might, perhaps, be founded on

immemorial usage: but if the members of the house of commons had not, likewise, been protected from arrests, it is easy to perceive, that their deliberations and decisions might, at any time, have been interrupted by the practices of the other branches of the government. But if we must still be referred to the privilege of parliament, he insisted that the protection of a member of the house of parliament, extended only to the case of arrests, or personal restraint, and not to the service of a summons*. Nay, we find that anciently the courts of justice only took cognizance of the privilege of parliament, to deliver the party out of custody, and not to abate the suit brought against him†. With respect to the nature of privilege, he argued, that in modern times, it was become an odious and unpalatable doctrine; and that if it were *res nova*, a very doubtful question might be made, whether the advantage which the public derive from the protection of its servants against vexatious and malicious arrests, compensates for the injury done by screening a man from the payment of his just debts. The policy of queen Elizabeth's observation, that "he was no fit subject to be employed in her service, that was subject to other men's actions, lest she might be thought to delay justice‡," deserves to be well considered in a republic; and it appears, indeed, to have operated considerably, even in that kingdom, from which all our precedents on the subject are derived. Statute after statute, has been framed to narrow this infraction of the common law: and by the influence of lord Mansfield's eloquence, the statute of the 10 Geo. III. c. 50. seems at

NOTES.

* Atk. tracts, 41, 42, 43. 1. Mod. 146. S. C.

† 1 Black. com. 166. Dyer 59. 55.

‡ Co. Litt. 131.

On the use of steeping seed barley in a dry season. By Mr. James Chapple. Addressed to the Secretary of the Bath Society.

S I R,

MY great success in making the following experiment, occasions my communicating an account of it to you, for the benefit of the public, if thought worthy a place in the third volume of the Bath Society's experimental papers.

The last spring being remarkably dry, I soaked my seed barley in the black water taken from a reservoir, which constantly receives the draining of my dung heap and stables. As the light corn floated on the top, I skimmed it off, and let the rest stand twenty-four hours. On taking it from the water, I mixed the seed grain with a sufficient quantity of sifted wood-ashes, to make it spread regularly, and sowed three fields with it. I began the sixteenth, and finished the twenty-third of April. The produce was sixty bushels per acre, of good clean barley, without any small or green corh, or weeds at harvest. No person in this country had better grain.

I sowed also several other fields with the same seed dry, and without any preparation: but the crop, like those of my neighbours, was very poor, not more than twenty bushels per acre, and much mixed with green corn and weeds, when harvested. I also sowed some of the seed dry on one ridge in each of my former fields: but the produce was very poor, in comparison of the other parts of the field.



Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church, at Salem, S. C.—Written in 1785.—Continued from Vol. VII. p. 263.

NUMBER VII.

THE ways of providence often appear dark and mysterious, even to the most careful observers, while here in this world; because the plan is im-

perfectly comprehended. The wicked who break through all the laws of God and man, are often prosperous, and in appearance happy; while the righteous are oppressed, and borne down with the heaviest afflictions and calamities. But when the vast chain, of which we now see only a few detached links, will be unfolded—when the curtain of time is drawn aside, and eternity opens upon us—when the mighty drama, if I may so express it, winds up—then we will see the justice of all the divine dispensations: then the good man shall be rewarded, the wicked punished, and the ways of God to man fully vindicated. The last act will unravel all, and exhibit every character in its true light. The christian considers all this: and therefore, though he cannot see through the dark maze of providence, he adores, in silence, what he is not able to fathom, and submits without repining to the determinations of heaven. He possesses his soul in patience; and looks forward to that great decisive day, when the justice of the supreme Ruler, will triumph in the reward of virtue; and the punishment of vice. This naturally leads to the doctrine of a future state, which is a part of the stupendous plan of providence, and is of the utmost importance to civil society. It is acknowledged, that this doctrine was of general belief among the civilized heathens: and we have supposed, that it was of singular utility to their civil policy. But it is beyond all doubt, that christians have advantages vastly superior in this particular, for which they are wholly indebted to divine revelation. Though the heathens expected a righteous judgment to come, and to be rewarded or punished hereafter, according as they behaved themselves here—they were much in the dark as to the circumstances of that judgment, and the nature of those rewards and punishments. All, who are acquainted with their writings, will readily own, that their ideas, concerning these things, were very absurd, gross, and puerile. But in the scriptures, especially in the new testament, where "life and im-

mortality are brought to light," we have all these particulars unfolded, as far as infinite wisdom sees necessary to our happiness—and as far, perhaps, as we are able to comprehend them, in our present imperfect state. The awful process of the general judgment is represented in such a manner as is suited to give us the most deep and solemn impressions of that great and terrible day.

The character of the Judge—his descent to judgment, in all the pomp and majesty of a God—the unsufferable splendor of his appearance—his bright, angelic retinue—the solemn and tremendous sound of the last trumpet, which announces his approach, and ushers in the awful scene—are all described with a grandeur and boldness of imagery, a force and elevation of language, which no human pen can reach. The resurrection of the dead by the all-awakening voice of the Son of God—the change of the living and their appearance, in one vast assembly, before the judge seated on his burning throne—the applauding sentence of the righteous—the just and terrible doom of the wicked—are set before us with such sublimity of thought, and energy of expression, as seem best adapted to arrest the attention, and impress the heart. Sympathizing nature adds to the solemnity and terror of the day. The sun is darkened; the moon turned into blood; lightnings flash; thunders roar; "the heavens pass away with a great noise; the elements melt with fervent heat;" and the earth dissolves in fire.

For the sake of brevity, some of those texts, in which the final judgment is described, are referred to below*: and whoever will please to turn to them, and read with attention, must be struck with the majesty and grandeur of the sentiments, if he have any taste for what is truly great and sublime. How mean and trifling are the fictions of the heathen poets—their representations of

Minos and Rhadamanthus separating the pious from the impious, and assigning them their distinct abodes, when compared with the descriptions which divine revelation gives us of the last judgment!

The rewards, which christianity proposes to all her sincere votaries, are the most great and glorious imaginable. They are pure, refined, intellectual, much more excellent and worthy of a rational creature, than those of any other religion. The Elysium of the heathens makes a poor and contemptible figure, when compared with the heaven of christians. Their "yellow meads of Aphodel," and bowers of Amaranth—their combats, running, wrestling, music, and dancing—will not bear a comparison with those sublime joys, and intellectual pleasures, which our religion promises, as the reward of virtuous and pious souls. The company and conversation of pious heroes, poets, and philosophers, which seem to have been the most exalted notion, that even a Socrates formed of future happiness, though much more reasonable and worthy of an intelligent nature—are nothing more than may be enjoyed in the present life. How far do even these fall short of the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect—and of that happiness which consists in the knowledge, contemplation, and fruition of the chief good—by which our natures are exalted to the highest pitch of perfection and felicity? What a despicable idea of future happiness do some of the more sensual Jews frame to themselves, when they place it in delicious feasts and rich banquets? The paradise of the mahometans is still more vile and sordid. How unworthy of rational creatures! to suppose that their supreme felicity consists in good fare, and the fruition of pleasures, altogether sensual, which brutes enjoy in a more exquisite degree.

Christianity reprobates every thing of this kind, and exhibits pleasures more noble, solid, and permanent, than the richest entertainments—the most exquisite sensual delights. Whatever is reck-

NOTE.

* Dan. 7. 9. 10. Rev. 20. 11. 12. 13. 2. Theff. 1. 7. 8. 9. Mat. 31. and seq.

oned great or glorious, grand or magnificent, among mortals—whatever affords the highest satisfaction, the most intense and poignant pleasure in this world—all these are employed by the inspired penmen, only as emblems of the heavenly felicity. Kingdoms, thrones, crowns, are but faint resemblances of “that exceeding and eternal weight of glory which shall be revealed hereafter.” The most sumptuous banquets, where the gentle fire of love lights up every countenance, joy transports, and friendship warms, are but imperfect representations of that “fulness of joy which is in the presence of God, and those rivers of immortal pleasure, which flow at his right hand.” The sacred writers, who make use of these earthly images, inform us, at the same time, that the celestial happiness is great beyond comparison, and far transcends our highest conceptions.—“As it is written, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him.” (To be continued.)



Inhabitants of Rhode island and Providence plantations.

1730.	Whites	15,302	
	Blacks	2,603	
1742.	Whites	29,755	17,905
	Blacks	4,373	
1761.	Whites	35,939	34,128
	Blacks	4,697	
1774.	Whites	54,435	40,636
	Blacks	5,243	
1783.	Whites	48,538	59,678
	Blacks	3,361	

Inhabitants of New Jersey.

1738.	Whites	43,388	
	Blacks	3,981	
1745.	Whites	56,797	47,369
	Blacks	4,606	
			61,403

1784.	Whites	139,934	
	Blacks	10,501	
			140,435



A short account of the hon. Theodorick Bland, esq. deceased, one of the Virginia delegation.

MR. Bland was a native of Virginia, and descended from an ancient and respectable family in that state. He was bred to physic: but upon the commencement of the American war, having been educated in very liberal principles, he quit the practice, and took an active part in the cause of his country. He soon rose from a volunteer to the rank of colonel, and had the command given him of a regiment of dragoons. While in the army, he frequently signalized himself by brilliant actions. In 1779, he was appointed to the command of the convention troops, at Albemarle barracks in Virginia; and continued in that situation till some time in 1780, when he was elected to a seat in congress.

He then resigned his commission of colonel, and continued in congress, three years, the time allowed by the confederation: after the expiration of this time, he again returned to Virginia, and was chosen a member of their state legislature. On the great question of the constitution, mr. Bland was opposed thereto, as supposing it repugnant to the interests of his country, and was in the minority that voted against the ratification. When the constitution was at length adopted, mr. Bland, acting in conformity to the character of a good citizen, submitted to the voice of the majority, and became a candidate to represent the district in which he lived, in the congress of the united states. He was elected without opposition; and has had the honour of representing them in the first congress under the new constitution. Mr. Bland's character in the present congress has been such as to merit the warmest esteem of his countrymen in general. In his character, he was honest, open, and candid; and bore an universal good character, in his intercourse with mankind.



T H E
A M E R I C A N M U S E U M,

Or, UNIVERSAL MAGAZINE,

For AUGUST, 1790.

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T O C O R R E S P O N D E N T S .

The continuation of the life of dr. Franklin is unavoidably postponed.
A freeman is received and under consideration.

Q. R's hint respecting the secretary of state's report, shall be attended to.
Amintor's communication is better suited to a newspaper than to our work.

Error in our last. Page 12, line, 1, for enormous read erroneous.

As to the nature of an oath, it is generally defined and understood to be, "a solemn appeal to God, as certainly knowing the truth or falsehood of what we declare, and as it were praying him to do us good or evil according as we shall make a true or false declaration."

In all civil societies, the strictest care should be taken, to find out, in all judicial proceedings, the truth of facts relating to the life, reputation, and property of private persons, or to the welfare of communities, as well as to oblige men to fulfil many necessary and important engagements, in which the good of individuals or of the public may be concerned. Now an oath is the strongest security that can be given or taken for men's speaking truly, or acting honestly and faithfully. It would therefore be too much neglecting and exposing the interests of individuals and of the community, to leave the weighty transactions of civil administration unsupported by the sanction and energy of oaths. And since there is such a necessity, in many cases, of making a solemn appeal to heaven, or of adjuring men by the living God, the greatest care should be taken, to preserve the sacredness of oaths, and not render them too cheap and familiar by a too frequent and unnecessary use of them. It is greatly to be wished, that there were not so many occasions of multiplying oaths, and of requiring them so often, and of such numbers of persons in civil transactions, in collecting excise duties, &c. unless greater pains were taken to impress men's minds with a sense of the solemnity and importance of an oath, and unless they had more of the fear of God before their eyes. The frequent exacting of oaths has, no doubt, a great tendency to lessen that reverence which is due to them, and of exposing men to the sin of perjury. It is enough to sink the heart of a good citizen, to see and hear the shifts and evasions which many will make, who have solemnly sworn by the omniscient God, that they will declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;

and to notice, by what flimsy arts, they will satisfy their consciences, when they have an opportunity of saving or getting money, by violating not merely their promises, but their oaths. Another great reason, no doubt, why solemn oaths are so little regarded, is because profane oaths are so frequently spoken and heard. To say nothing of the impiety of profane swearing, it is a most unmanly and causeless vice, and has a most malignant aspect on the interests of civil society. Profaneness is as poor an evidence of wit and sense, of courage and of good breeding, as it is of solid goodness. The dregs of mankind are as great adepts in this art as the pretended gentleman. And as to the tendency which profane swearing has to introduce perjury, and otherwise injure the interests of society, it is thus expressed by a lively writer: "If the devil himself was to study and contrive a way for the disarming of mankind of that natural reverence and veneration they have for oaths, and bringing them without much scruple of conscience to swear any thing, at any time, whether true or false, as their own interests might tempt them to it, he could not pitch upon a more effectual one than this, to make oaths familiar to them upon all occasions, and to bring them into customary use in ordinary conversation. That man, who can swear an hundred times a day, when there is no reason for it, I cannot imagine what regard he can have for an oath, when he is called upon to give it, where there is reason."

Worcester, June 3, 1790.



Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church at Salem, S. C.—Written in 1785.—
Page 48. NUMBER VIII.

CHRIStIANITY not only gives us the most noble and rational representation of that immense and unutterable reward, which awaits good men in the eternal world; but also exhibits the most terrible and striking picture of that punishment, which will

be inflicted on the wicked. The heathen writers have been much more happy in their descriptions of the latter than the former. Their deep and dismal dungeons, dark and dreary caverns, whirlpools of filth and torrents of fire—their endless labours, racking wheels, and tormenting furies, are no faint images of terror, and bear a considerable analogy to the christian notions on this head. But what are these, when compared with the descriptions, which the pen of inspiration gives us of hell—the seat of enraged justice and burning vengeance—and of those eternal pains, which the enkindled wrath of the Almighty inflicts upon the wretched ghosts, who are condemned to those gloomy mansions of endless horror and despair? “The blackness of darkness forever—the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched—weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth—fire, brimstone, and an horrible tempest!” what gloomy and dreadful images are these! How awfully grand and striking! How well accommodated to awaken our fears—to deter us from evil—and stimulate us to the practice of piety and virtue; without which we cannot expect to escape the threatened punishment! whoever will take the trouble to consult the numerous passages of holy writ, where the future punishment of the wicked is described, will perceive how well they are suited to convey the most strong and terrible ideas of extreme unutterable misery. In all the heathen writings, we cannot find such awful and striking pictures of the keen anguish, the unspeakable agony and horror of those guilty wretches, who “lie down in sorrow, and make their bed in hell.” Two of the greatest heathen poets have tried their strength, and exerted the whole force of their talents, in describing a future state. All those great and splendid images—all that rich and beautiful colouring, which the bold, glowing, and creative fancy of Homer, or the fine, correct and copious imagination of Virgil could bestow—have been employed to heighten and embellish the subject. After all, I think every capa-

ble and candid judge will allow, that their representations are far from being equal to those of scripture, even in point of sublimity; not to mention other things of much greater importance.

Hear what an eminent and judicious prelate of the English church says on this subject. Bishop Tillotson, after having given a description of the last day from scripture, has the following passage; “I appeal to any man, whether this be not a representation of things very proper and suitable to that great day, wherein he, who made the world, shall come to judge it? and whether the wit of man ever devised any thing so awful and so agreeable to the majesty of God, and the solemn judgment of the whole world? The descriptions which Virgil makes of the Elysian fields, and the infernal regions, how infinitely do they fall short of the majesty of the holy scriptures, and the descriptions there made of heaven and hell, and of the great and terrible day of the Lord! so that in comparison they are childish and trifling. And yet, perhaps, he had the most regular and most governed imagination of any man that ever lived, and observed the greatest decorum in his characters and descriptions.” “But who can declare the great things of God, but he to whom God shall reveal them?”

These few hints, concerning the christian doctrines of a righteous judgment to come, and a future state of rewards and punishments, may serve to shew of how much importance they are to civil society. He, who firmly believes in a future judgment, and reflects with any degree of seriousness on the awful solemnities of that great and terrible day, when he must stand before an almighty and omniscient Judge, and give an account of all his actions—cannot but be influenced in some measure by such a belief. And the influence, which such a prospect has upon the minds of men, must be favourable to civil government, by restraining their passions, curbing licentiousness, and deterring them from violence and injustice.

Who, that firmly believes, and seri-

ously contemplates the immense and unspeakable rewards which await the righteous in a future life, can avoid being allured to the pursuit of virtue? who, that looks forward, and considers the awful doom of those who persist in a course of vice and impiety, can, boldly and without remorse, go on in the road which leads to eternal misery? "It is impossible" says an excellent writer, "to bid defiance to eternal ruin, without some refuge in imagination—some presumption of escape." As long as men really believe, that there is a just God, who will punish their crimes in a future state, they will be under some restraint. They seldom give themselves over to a life of avowed vice and immorality until they come to doubt or disbelieve this truth. Hence it is, that they are obliged to take refuge in infidelity, before they can wholly silence the clamours of conscience, and sin at ease. The christian doctrines of a future judgment, of heaven, and of hell, have a greater influence, even on the most profligate, than, perhaps is generally imagined: and if men were

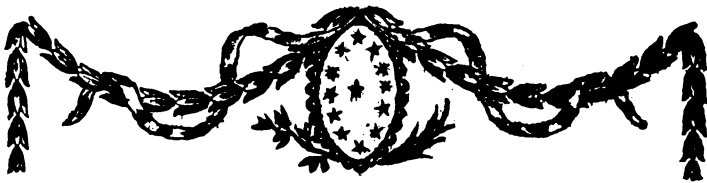
NOTE.

* I have all along taken it for granted, that the punishments, which christianity holds up to the wicked in a future state, are eternal in the strict and proper sense. The contrary opinion is embraced and propagated with much zeal, by some preachers in America. Leaving it to others, is, to defend the truth in this particular, it is to my purpose only to observe, that the doctrine of universal final salvation for all men, even the most wicked, tends to encourage immorality, and consequently is pernicious to civil society. The most ingenious advocates of this doctrine, tho' they may deny, cannot obviate this odious consequence; which, were there no other arguments, ought to convince every man, that their notions are false and dangerous. The propagators of such poisonous doctrines ought to be despised, and treated with contempt by all the friends of civil government, if from no other, at least from political motives.

under no restraint from this quarter, we should find them much more difficult to govern than they are. Lord Shaftesbury tells us, "that among the vulgar, a heaven and a hell may prevail, where a jail and a gallows are thought insufficient." And yet this is the man who was for substituting a fine taste instead of religion, for the regulation of men's manners. If indeed this noble author could give all men a just taste, it would be doing something; but who does not see, that this is impossible? as one of his answerers well observes, "he might as well think of making them all lords."

Lord Bolingbroke speaks the same language. He confesses in the most ample manner, "that the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and a future state of rewards and punishments, cannot fail to have a great effect on the manners of men; that the belief of them tends to enforce civil laws and restrain vice;" and yet he strenuously endeavours to overthrow those doctrines.

I have often wondered at the absurdity of those men, who glory in the name of patriot, as these celebrated writers certainly did; and yet make it their business to ridicule religion and weaken its obligations. They acknowledge, that it is a necessary restraint on the manners of the multitude, and therefore useful to government; and yet do their utmost to bring it into contempt. I know no better way to expose the inconsistency of such men, than by comparing them to an architect, who with much cost and labour raises and adorns the superstructure, while he is pulling away the main pillars which support the fabric. Can that man be reckoned a genuine lover of his country, who endeavours to promote vice, and corrupt the morals of the people? And I must take the liberty to think, that this is the case of all those who propagate infidelity—and, under the odious name of superstition, endeavour to blacken christianity; and eradicate all sense of religion from the minds of men. If I mistake not, we have some patriots of this stamp among ourselves, who, by their



THE
A M E R I C A N M U S E U M,
 OR, UNIVERSAL MAGAZINE,

For SEPTEMBER, 1790.

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 TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Remarks on capital punishments are received and under consideration.

The extracts made by M. shall appear in due course.

Instance of torture in Scotland—account of the floating gardens in Mexico—
account of Locke's plan of government for Carolina—in our next.

We are sorry to be again obliged to defer the memoirs of dr. Franklin.

The remarks on American architecture—on Chesterfield's letters—on the im-
portance of the present era, &c. shall be inserted as soon as possible. The future
correspondence of the writer of these essays shall be regarded as a particular favour.

The copy of a letter written by dr. Franklin to a lady in France, was
mislaid—otherwise, it should have been published immediately after it was received
—It has been since found, and shall appear in our next number.

As the alteration in the time of publication, which, it was supposed, would be
more agreeable to distant subscribers, without being at all inconvenient to those
in the city and its vicinity, has been objected to by many, the museum will in
future be published on the original plan, viz. on the first day of the month suc-
ceeding that, of which it bears the name.

Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church at Salem in South Carolina. Written anno 1785.—P. 79.

NUMBER VIII.

WE now proceed, in the second place, to treat of the worship which christianity enjoins.

That worship which the christian religion requires, is pure, simple, spiritual, and perfectly conformable to the nature of its object. God is a spirit, and therefore we are commanded to "worship him in spirit and in truth." A supreme and unfeigned love—a sincere and ardent gratitude—a solemn awe and reverence—an humble confidence and entire resignation to his will—are the leading dispositions he requires in his worshippers. The supreme excellence of his nature, the transcendent glory of his attributes, which far surpass the most exalted conceptions of men and angels, render him the proper object of our supreme love. His overflowing bounty, the riches of his grace, the number and greatness of his mercies, demand our highest and warmest gratitude. His awful glory and tremendous majesty call for holy fear and dread. His power, wisdom, truth, and justice, should inspire us with confidence, and lead us to acquiesce with absolute submission in all his righteous dispensations. In the proper exercise of these dispositions, consists that internal worship which our religion enjoins. The external part consists in the outward expressions of these inward dispositions, by such words, actions, and attitudes, as are most proper to convey the sentiments of the heart. And our religion teaches us, that these outward expressions are no further acceptable to the Deity, than as they are connected with, and flow from, those internal dispositions which he requires. To "draw near to God with our lips, when our hearts are far from him," is hypocritical and odious in his sight. To exhibit outward expressions of love, reverence, gratitude, &c. where there is nothing of these dispositions at heart, is only a

solemn farce—a piece of profane mockery; and, so far from pleasing God, is an abomination to him. He requires "truth in the inward parts." A pure, sincere, humble, and upright heart is the object of his highest approbation. If this be wanting, nothing else can be acceptable. All the essential parts of christian worship are appointed by God himself, who best knows what is agreeable to his own nature, and suited to our condition. They all tend to suggest spiritual ideas, to detach the mind from objects of sense, and fix it on the important realities of an invisible world.

The religious worship of a people, especially the public part of it, will always have a considerable influence on their morals; and this influence will be good or bad, according to the nature of their worship. If that be pure, rational, and agreeable to the nature of a holy Being, it will lead to purity of morals, and therefore promote the happiness of civil society. If the contrary, the effect will be directly opposite. In the public worship, which genuine christianity prescribes, every part is calculated to inspire us with an aversion from vice, and a love of piety and virtue. Our prayers, when assembled for public worship, are a solemn address to that pure and immaculate Being, who is the Author of life, and the fountain of all our blessings. In these we recognize his glorious perfections, express our dependence on him, and return the tribute of our gratitude, for his great and manifold mercies. Here we confess the evil of sin, plead for the pardon of it, through the merits of a Redeemer, and acknowledge the obligations we are under, to renounce it, and live sober, righteous, and godly lives. It is not necessary to take up the reader's time, in shewing how well suited all these things are to impress the heart with pious sentiments, and fortify the mind with fresh resolutions against whatever is opposed to the nature of that holy Being to whom our prayers are addressed. If this part of christian worship be performed in a proper manner, it cannot fail to have an influence on our moral

temper and practice, as favourable to society as it is extensive. To return to those vicious practices, the criminal and unreasonableness of which we have been just confessing, and from which we have been just praying to be delivered, has something in it very absurd and shocking to an ingenuous mind.

That part of our worship, which is more particularly designed to celebrate the praises of our Creator, has the same moral tendency. In this the charms of music and poetry are added to heighten our devotion—awaken the soul—inflame the heart—and raise our affections to that pitch of ardour and elevation, which is justly due to the object of our adoration. Our songs of praise are adapted to heighten our conceptions, and give us the most exalted thoughts of God. The more our views of the divine perfections are enlarged, the more intensely will the pure flame of divine love burn in our hearts; and if it be true, that love assimilates to the object beloved, the more we love, the more we will resemble the Deity. The more we resemble him in his moral attributes, the more we must abhor sin, that abominable thing which he hates. The more deeply his image is engraved on our hearts, the more we will be disposed to imitate his infinite benevolence; and of consequence, to promote the happiness of our fellow citizens, by the steady practice of every social duty.

As to those grave religious discourses, which are delivered in our christian assemblies, they are so evidently calculated to promote virtue, and combat vice, that little need be said concerning them. While the ministers of our religion pursue the original design of their institution, and live and preach as christianity requires, their public instructions and solemn admonitions will always tend to facilitate the designs of a wise and salutary policy. If they follow the example, and pay a due regard to the precepts, of their heavenly Master, their discourses must necessarily be adapted to make men wiser and better. In these the pure and heavenly doctrines of our religion are explained

and pressed, her precepts inculcated, and her laws and sanctions vindicated. Here the eternal world is laid open, and all the interesting and important realities of a future state unfolded. Heaven and hell, eternal happiness and eternal misery, with the grandeur and solemnity of those scenes which bring on the general consummation, are held up to view. The lovely and alluring forms of virtue and religion—the guilt and deformity of vice—the unspeakable eternal felicity which attends the one—and the everlasting misery which is the consequence of the other, are set before our eyes. Such pictures as these, executed by the bold and correct hand of a master, and exhibited in those rich and strong colourings, which the glowing pencil of inspiration supplies, must have a great influence on the morals of a people. In the compass of nature, there are no other topics better adapted to rouse and fix the attention of men, to seize the imagination, alarm the conscience, excite their hopes and fears, and consequently to reclaim them from vice and impiety, to the love and practice of universal righteousness.

To what hath been said, concerning our religious worship, it may be proper to add, that even the positive institutions of christianity, so much derided by infidels, are designed and excellently well suited to promote purity of heart and life. The rite of baptism points out the necessity of inward moral purity, and lays us under an express and solemn obligation, to renounce the deeds of darkness, and consecrate ourselves to the service of God, by a life of piety and virtue. The eucharist is a commemoration of the stupendous and unparalleled love of God in giving his Son to redeem our sinful race, to restore us from the ruins of our fall, and open the gates, of the heavenly paradise. In this memorial of the sufferings and death of our compassionate Redeemer, we have the most striking display of the immaculate holiness of God, and of his infinite opposition to sin, which required so costly a sacrifice. Here too, we oblige ourselves in the most solemn

and explicit manner, to depart from all iniquity, and lead a holy life, by practising piety towards God, as well as justice and charity towards our fellow-men. Pliny tells us, that the primitive christians used to meet together, and bind themselves by a solemn oath (sacrament) "that they would not steal, nor rob, nor be guilty of a breach of faith." This might have taught him, that christianity was at least favourable to morals, and ought to have sheathed the persecuting sword of civil government. What can be more proper than this holy institution, to keep alive a sense of religion in the hearts of men; to root out from their minds all hatred and malice; and unite them in the bonds of love and friendship?

If an affecting view of the most astonishing and unmerited love, exhibited to our senses by the most apt and significant symbols, can excite our love—if the richest blessings which heaven could bestow, can excite our gratitude—surely this holy feast, upon the sacrifice of our Redeemer, must have a powerful influence upon our lives. If the most solemn vows and oaths of fidelity to the great Author of our salvation, have any force to bind christians, the sacred engagements we come under, by taking this sacrament, must be a strong security against the allurements of vice, and a continual excitement to persevere in the paths of virtue. Thus every part of christian worship, as prescribed by its divine Author, leads to, and enforces purity of manners, and serves to restrain men from those vicious courses, which, in the natural stream of things, tend to the destruction of civil government. Had we time to enter into a minute comparison of the christian with other religions, its superior excellence in this respect would appear in the strongest light. It cannot be denied, that the worship of those heathen nations, which have been most renowned for their civil policy, not only in many instances encouraged, but even consisted in the grossest immoralities. This was the case among the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. To say nothing

of the human sacrifices which they offered up to appease their angry deities, what were their mysteries, but mysteries of iniquity? In the celebration of these, the foulest crimes were perpetrated, and the most flagitious lusts indulged, under the covert of darkness. Bacchus, Venus, and Cupid, were worshipped with the most impure and abominable rites. Female prostitution, lust, drunkenness, and the wildest riot, were not only concomitants, but essential constituents of their worship. The civil magistrates of Rome were fully sensible of the necessary tendency of these enormities to corrupt the morals of the people, and of the political evils which flowed from these polluted sources. Accordingly, they endeavoured to obviate them, by enacting severe laws for the regulation of the mysteries: but finding these insufficient, the orgia were finally abolished throughout Italy, by a decree of the senate, A. U. 568. The Eleusinian mysteries, which were reckoned more pure, continued till the reign of the emperor Theodosius the great, and then underwent the fate of all human institutions*.

NOTE.

* I am not ignorant, that some christian writers have supposed the heathen mysteries, particularly the Eleusinian, to have been originally pure, and designed by the civil magistrate, to correct the pernicious influence of the commonly received mythology on the morals of the people. The fathers condemn them as impure and immoral in their original institution; and insist much on the shocking enormities practised in them, under the veil of night. Le Clerc is, I believe, the only author, who, contrary to all evidence from antiquity, and for no other reason, that I can see, but to gratify his spleen against the fathers, contends that they never were corrupted at all. Whatever was the original state of the mysteries, it is enough for me, that in time they became such as they are represented above. This is abundantly evident from the heathen writers themselves, who complain of their cor-

I do not wish to enlarge, by enquiring into the nature and tendency of the various kinds of religious worship, which are, or have been used in the world; and therefore shall conclude by observing, that they all fall short of the christian, in their tendency to promote purity of morals, and consequently cannot be of equal utility to civil government.

(To be continued.)



*Essay on population. From the Repository, a London periodical publication, of 1788.**

IMPORTANT incidents, when they occur but seldom, produce an eager search after principles and analogies to explain the rare phenomena: but, where they are seen often, such is the influence of custom in quieting our attention, that we frequently forget either to notice the facts, or to investigate their causes. It was at all times easy to attain a knowledge of the ruling principles of national population. When parents had imparted life to their offspring, food, alone, it was evident, could sustain that life; and it was scarcely less evident, that a facility of procuring subsistence must naturally not only increase the number of marriages, but likewise the issue proceeding from them. The tardy reception of these truths has probably been increased by the apprehension, that it was derogatory to the human race, to prove it dependent, like the lower classes of creation, upon incidental circumstances. The signal instance of the American colonies has, however, produced such overwhelming evidence; that mankind, like plants and

NOTES.

ruption; and is acknowledged by those christians, who, contrary to the fathers, have a favourable opinion of them in their first institution. Le Clerc, if indeed he deserve the name of a christian, must still be excepted.

* For a former essay on this subject, extracted from the same work, see the 7th volume of the Museum, page 87.

animals, fluctuate in number according to situation, that the most stubborn and supine must necessarily be impressed by it.

Having, in a former paper, discussed the primary principles of population, I now proceed to examine, and to exemplify, the comparative rate of population in old and new countries.

I shall commence the second branch of my enquiry by selecting some passages from Smith's Wealth of Nations; not that this writer is the first who has touched upon the subject, but he has very minutely comprehended the chief parts of it. His remarks will be strengthened by others, and the whole be followed by proper comments, in which will be supplied whatever appears to have been left imperfect.

'The colony (says this able writer) of a civilized nation, which takes possession of a waste country, or of one so thinly inhabited, that the natives easily give place to the new settlers, advances more rapidly to wealth and greatness, than any other human society. The colonists carry out with them a knowledge of agriculture and of other useful arts, superior to what can grow up of its own accord, in the course of many centuries, among savage and barbarous nations. They carry out with them too, the habit of subordination, some notion of regular government, of the system of laws which support it, and of a regular administration of justice.' 'Every colonist gets more land than he can possibly cultivate. Having no rent and scarce any taxes to pay, he has every motive to render as great as possible, a produce which is thus to be almost entirely his own.' 'But his land is commonly so extensive, that with all his own industry, and with all the industry of other people whom he can get to employ, he can seldom make it produce the tenth part of what it is capable of producing. He is eager, therefore, to collect labourers from all quarters, and to reward them with the most liberal wages; which, though very high, considered as the wages of labour, are very low, considered as the price of what is



THE
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By the British packet, arrived at New York, London papers have been received, down to the sixth of October.—From a few of the latest, the following is abstracted.

An engagement, between the Austrians and Brabanters, ended with the loss of 8000 men to the latter. Congress appear far from being discouraged by this check, and are determined to support their cause, to the last extremity.—This account is dated, Brussels, October 1.

The war, between Spain and the Barbary states, has been begun by the cannonading of Tangier, in the beginning of September.

After much warm debate, in the national assembly of France, on the 27th of September, and much confusion, on the following day, it was decreed,—(513 to 427)—that

The debt, immediately due from the state, as well as that of the late clergy, shall be paid, in the order hereafter to be regulated, in assignats current, without interest. There shall not be more than 12,000 millions of livres, in assignats, in circulation at the same time, including the 400 millions already decreed. The assignats, as they shall be returned into the treasury, shall be burned; and a new emission of them shall not be made, without a decree from the national assembly; and this shall always be made on condition, that they do not exceed the value of the national domains, nor be above 12,000 millions at the same time.

justly values herself, to one of the best of men, and, perhaps, the most deserving of husbands.



Essay on the influence of religion on civil society. By Thomas Reece, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church at Salem, in South Carolina. Written anno 1785.—P. 124.

AGREEABLY to the order prescribed, we come now in the third place to speak of the precepts which christianity inculcates.

Whatever objections have been made by deists, against the doctrines and worship of christianity, the most sensible and ingenious of them have very little to urge against its moral precepts. On a careful and candid examination, they are found so conformable to the great principles of natural religion, that those, who have not renounced all religion, both natural and revealed, are constrained to acknowledge their excellence. Reason and experience, both, serve to convince us, that the strict observance of them tends to exalt our natures, and promote our happiness, in the present life. All, who are not blind to the beauty and utility of virtue, and its tendency to promote the happiness of society, must acknowledge the importance of christian morality. If we a little consider the several duties, which christianity enjoins upon us, as social creatures, we will immediately see, how exactly its precepts fall in with the ends of government, and how well they are suited to co-operate with, and facilitate the execution of wise and wholesome laws. "The morality of the gospel," said the dying Montesquieu, "is a most excellent thing, and the most valuable present, that could possibly have been received by man, from his creator."

If it should be said, that those duties, which we owe to each other in the social state, are dictated by reason, and so a part of natural religion; and that christianity is therefore of little consequence in this respect—I will not now dispute the fact, but must take the liberty to deny the consequence. Though

it should be granted, that christianity neither enjoins nor forbids any thing in moral practice, which natural religion does not enjoin or forbid, it will not hence follow, that christianity is useless. Those moral duties, which our religion inculcates, are indeed agreeable to reason, and appear to have a fitness and propriety in them; and, on this account may be reckoned a part of natural religion. But who will dare to affirm, that the whole system of what we call natural religion, could be reasoned out by the most enlightened of mortals, without any assistance from divine revelation? And even supposing this were possible, there is no ground to believe, that men in general could make the discovery in this way; or if they could, there is not the least probability that they would, considering their negligence and inattention to such things. Many amongst us are ignorant of some very important duties of natural religion, though revealed to them, and repeatedly inculcated upon them in their bibles. What must we then suppose would be the case, if they were left to investigate these duties by an intricate chain of reasoning?

It ought also to be considered, that christianity is a very important confirmation of natural religion. Here the conclusions of reason are corroborated, and rendered more certain, by additional evidence of divine testimony. Those miracles and prophecies, which were designed as a proof of the christian dispensation, are also a proof of the truth of natural religion. Thus the dictates of natural light are ratified—if I may so express it—by the stamp of divine authority, and their truth proclaimed by a voice from heaven. Hence we see, that the christian system of morals is to be considered, not barely as the deductions of reason, but the deductions of reason confirmed by an express revelation from God himself, and inculcated by his authoritative command; and therefore ought to have greater weight with us, than the mere conclusions of fallible reason. Suppose a man able to demonstrate (which I suppose may be done,

though perhaps by few) that it is his duty to love his enemies—would he not reckon it a great confirmation of his conclusion, if, at the end of his demonstration, he should discover, that this duty was expressly revealed, and pre-emptorily commanded, by God himself? Would not his reasonings be much more satisfactory to himself, and more likely to influence his practice? It hath been often urged, and therefore we shall not here insist upon it, that the most enlightened of the heathens were much in the dark, with respect to many of those moral duties, the reasonableness and propriety of which are evident to those instructed by christianity. And it is worthy of remark, that those very heathens were, perhaps, more indebted to divine revelation, than some of its enemies are willing to admit. Were this a proper place to enter into such a subject, it might be made more than probable, that, had they been left to mere reason and the light of nature, their morals would have been much more deficient. But our professed design will not allow us to enlarge upon these things. The few hints thrown out may suffice to show, that it does not in the least derogate from the importance of christianity, in the view we are now considering it, that its moral precepts coincide with the great code of nature's laws. On the contrary, when these precepts, thus conformable to the light of nature, are confirmed by the authority of heaven, urged upon us by our rightful sovereign, and enforced by the most express and awful sanctions, it is reasonable to conclude, that they will have a much greater influence on our practice, than if they were the sole result of reason, which, all know, is liable to err.

It may perhaps be expected, that, in treating this part of my subject, I should draw a comparison between christian and heathen morality; but as this has been often done, and the superior excellence of christian morals fully shown, I shall content myself with treating some of those moral precepts of christianity, which appear to have the most direct influence on society. Some occasional re-

marks, concerning the errors and deficiencies of the heathen moralists, will naturally fall in, as we pass along.

1. That benevolent disposition, which christianity requires, has a direct tendency to promote the peace and happiness of men in a state of society.

Christianity is, beyond comparison, the purest and most extensive system of benevolence, that has ever been published to the world. It every where breathes the spirit of love, and inculcates the laws of kindness and humanity. That good will towards men, which it requires, is universal, and embraces the whole human race. It is not confined to the narrow circle of friends and relations, but extends even to enemies. The precept of our saviour, which requires us to love, do good to, and pray for our enemies, is peculiar to christianity; at least we do not find it so expressly taught, and particularly enforced, by any other religion. The Jews entertained an implacable hatred against all those, who were not of their own nation and religion. Their malevolence, to all but their own brethren, was so remarkable, that the heathens have taken notice of it. "Their fidelity," says Tacitus, "is inviolable, and their pity ready towards each other; but to all others they bear a mortal hatred." The apostle Paul, a more impartial judge, gives them the same character. "They please not God, and are contrary to all men." They even thought themselves at liberty to indulge their malice against private enemies of their own nation. Though the precepts of their law, rightly understood, were far from allowing such a malevolent disposition, it is certain, that, by their corrupt interpretations, they drew this inference from them. And it must be confessed, that the god-like duty of loving our enemies, was not so clearly revealed and so expressly inculcated, under the Jewish, as under the christian dispensation. Here we have it enforced by the noblest of all considerations, namely, the resemblance it gives us to the deity, who indiscriminately showers down the common blessings of his

providence, both on his friends and on his enemies.

The bloody and vindictive spirit of the Mahometan religion is well known. Grotius has emphatically characterized it in a few words : " Mahometis religio in armis nata, nihil spirat nisi arma, armis propagatur." " The religion of Mahomet originated in arms, breathes nothing but arms, is propagated by arms." The civil institutions of the Greeks, particularly those of Sparta, were principally directed to war. Conquest, rapine, blood-shed, triumph, were their chief aim. To rob and plunder their neighbours was so far from being reckoned infamous among them, that they gloried in it. And it is worthy of observation, that these institutions were admired by their philosophers, and approved by their oracles. Aristotle is not ashamed to affirm, " That war with barbarians is natural." The Romans were little better than the robbers and butchers of the world. Their fame, wealth, power, and grandeur, arose principally from the conquest and spoils of those, whom they made or found their enemies. They were so infamous for their unjust wars and public robberies, that Cicero himself scruples not to declare, " That if every one had his own, they must return to their old cottages." In a word, the many instances of flagrant injustice and cruelty, publicly approved both by the Greeks and Romans, show, that they had scarcely any idea of that universal benevolence, that humane, gentle and peaceable disposition, which the precepts of our religion so strongly recommend and enforce*. War was their trade,

NOTE.

* It must be confessed, that christian nations have, in many instances, shown too little regard to the spirit of their religion, in the wars they have commenced and carried on. They have often been cruel and unjust, contrary to that humane and peaceable disposition enjoined by the gospel. It cannot, however, be denied, that christianity has had a considerable influence on men, and laid them under great restraints in this respect. The history of Europe evi-

and their religion restrained them from nothing, which they imagined might extend their empire and increase their power.

Some of the heathen moralists have told us, that faith is to be kept with an enemy ; and that injuries should be forgiven, on the repentance and acknowledgment of the offender ; but I do not recollect that one of them, before the christian æra, requires men to love those who are in a state of actual enmity with them. To do good to such, to pray for them, and promote their happiness, is a pitch of philanthropy, to which christianity alone teaches us to aspire. How much such a disposition tends to the peace and happiness of men in the social state, is obvious at first view. Love is the great cement of society, and a principal bond of union among its members. As malice, hatred, envy, and all the inimical passions, naturally tend to disunite men, and destroy that concord, which is the greatest strength and security of government ; so mutual love sweetly and powerfully attracts and binds them to each other. He who loves his neighbour as himself, and sincerely desires his happiness, needs no other motive, to excite him to the most exact and careful performance of all the social duties. A heart overflowing with benevolence to our fellow-men, will be a more powerful restraint from injury, and a stronger excitement to beneficence, than all the terror of civil laws. The noble and generous principle will operate uniformly and efficaciously ; and by an internal secret impulse, direct and spur us on to a careful observance of all the laws of kindness and humanity. Prompted by an ardent wish to pro-

NOTE.

dently shows how much it tends to check the ferocity and soften the rugged manners of those nations who embrace it. If I mistake not, it produced a remarkable change on the Roman empire. We do not find the same cruel and sanguinary disposition prevailing, after it became christian. War is divested of half its horrors, by the mild and gentle spirit of christianity.

mote the happiness of all around us, we will perform every kind office, with a pleasure and facility, unknown to a narrow and selfish mind. We will often forget or over-look our own interest, to oblige a friend, to vindicate the innocent, relieve the distressed, and succour the miserable. He who is conformed to the temper, governed by the precepts, and influenced by the example of the benevolent Jesus, will, like the good Samaritan, pour balm even into the wounds of an enemy; will feed him when hungry, clothe him when naked, return him good for evil, and blessing for cursing. In a word, that unbounded benevolence, which christianity requires, necessarily leads to the performance of all the duties of charity, hospitality, gratitude, mercy and compassion, which, we have shown, human laws cannot enforce, and which are nevertheless necessary to the peace and happiness of civil government. (*To be continued.*)

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The origin of despair.

HAPPINESS depends upon the gratification of our desires and passions. The happiness of Titus arose from indulging a beneficent temper: Epaminondas reaped enjoyment from the love of his country. The love of fame was the source of Cæsar's felicity; and the gratification of groveling appetites gave delight to Vitellius. It has also been observed, that some one passion generally assumes a pre-eminence in the mind, and not only predominates over other appetites and desires, but contends with reason, and is often victorious. In proportion as one passion gains strength, the rest languish and are enfeebled. They are seldom exercised; their gratifications yield transient pleasure, become of slight importance, are dispirited and decay: thus our happiness is attached to one ruling and ardent passion; but our reasonings, concerning future events, are weak and short-sighted. We form schemes of felicity that never can be realized—we cherish affection, that can never be gratified.

If, therefore, the disappointed passion has been long encouraged—if the gay visions of hope and imagination have long administered to its violence—if it is confirmed by habit, in the temper and constitution—if it has superseded the operation of other active principles, and so enervated their strength—its disappointment will be embittered: and sorrow, prevented by no other passion, will prey, unabating, on the desolate, abandoned spirits. We may also observe, that none are more liable to afflictions of this sort, than those, to whom nature has given extreme sensibility. Alive to every impression, their feelings are exquisite; they are eager in every pursuit; their imaginations are vigorous, and well-adapted to fire them. They live, for a time, in a state of anarchy, exposed to the inroads of every passion; and, though possessed of singular abilities, their conduct will be capricious. Glowing with the warmest affections, open, generous, and candid, yet prone to inconstancy, they are incapable of lasting friendship. At length, by force of repeated indulgence, some one passion becomes habitual, occupies the heart, seizes the understanding, and impatient of resistance, or controul, weakens or extirpates every opposing principle: disappointment ensues; no passion remains, to administer comfort; and the original sensibility, which prompted this disposition, will render the mind more susceptible of anguish, and yield it a prey to despondency. We ought, therefore, to beware of limiting our felicity to the gratification of any individual passion. Nature, ever wise and provident, has endowed us with capacities for various pleasures, and has opened to us many fountains of happiness;—let no tyrannous passion, let no rigid doctrine deter thee;—drink of the streams, be moderate, and be grateful.

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Exhortation on early rising.

IF the practice of rising betimes can be proved to be universally beneficial to mankind;—if it can be shown to have been always mentioned with the



T H E
A M E R I C A N M U S E U M,
 O R, U N I V E R S A L M A G A Z I N E,

F o r D E C E M B E R, 1790.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

IF the writer of the reply to the remarks of Columbianus will allow us to soften a little the asperity of his essay, it shall appear in our next number.

Thoughts on the establishment of academies in Pennsylvania, by Regulus, are under consideration.

A. B. is informed that the whole of the constitutions of the united states will be completed in the ninth volume of the museum, which will be concluded in June next.

T. C.'s poetry is too incorrect for publication.

I have seen and I have not seen, by gov. Livingston, shall appear in our next.

Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M. pastor of the Presbyterian church at Salem in South Carolina. —Written anno 1785.—Page 233.

NUMBER X.

CHRIStIANITY not only enjoins meekness and benevolence, but expressly condemns a contrary disposition. A malicious and vindictive temper is directly opposite to the precepts of the gospel. Hear the apostle Paul on this subject, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves; but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.' Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head*." This is perfectly consistent with the precepts and example of his meek and heavenly master, who teaches us to expect forgiveness, only on condition that we forgive others. "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father, who is in heaven, forgive your trespasses." The same precept and example is illustrated and enforced, with incomparable strength and beauty, in the parable of the debtors and creditors, Mat. xviii. from the 23d verse, to the close.

The Jewish doctors, by straining the law of retaliation for personal injuries beyond its original design, gave too much countenance to private revenge. They enjoined it on men, as their duty, to insist upon retaliation; and even went so far as to pronounce it lawful, in many cases, for the injured person to avenge himself, provided his revenge did not exceed the due measure. This was an evident abuse of the law, which only empowered the judges to give "an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth," if the injured party demanded it, and would not be satisfied with a

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* I. E. melt and soften him by the warmth of your charity, as the hardest and most stubborn metals are melted and softened by the heat of additional coals heaped on them in the furnace.

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pecuniary compensation. Our Saviour teaches a more excellent morality, and a more heroic pitch of meekness and patience. "Ye have heard, that it has been said, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;' but I say unto you, that you resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also: and if any man will sue thee at law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." Here our Saviour not only condemns the corrupt glosses of the Jewish doctors; but, as is plain from the general strain of his language, forbids christians some things, which were permitted to the Jews, under a more imperfect dispensation†. He does not allow his followers to insist upon retaliation for lesser injuries, and condemns that litigious temper, which urges men, to seek redress by law for every trifling offence; teaching us rather to relinquish part of our right, and bear with a small degree of injury, than violently to prosecute the offender.

It is not easy to determine, what was the prevailing opinion of the heathen philosophers and moralists, on this subject. Some of them approve of revenge, others condemn it‡. In this, as well as in most other points of morality, they were much divided, and advanced sentiments repugnant to each other. How well soever some of them may have

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† Vide Tertull. Chrysoft. and Whitby in loc.

‡ Socrates, Plato, Maximus, Tyrius, Seneca, and some others, of less note, condemn revenge; particularly the last, who seems to have had the fullest and clearest notions on this subject, for which he was perhaps indebted to christianity. Aristotle is plainly on the other side, and Tully, as is usual with him, wavers. In his offices and his oration for Marcellus, he speaks much in favour of clemency and a mild forgiving spirit; but in one of his epistles to Atticus, he thus lays open his heart: "Odi hominem, et odero: utinam ulcisci possim."

spoken on this subject, it is plain, that our duty, in this respect, is pointed out by Christ and his apostles, with much greater clearness and precision, and enforced with an energy and authority, much better adapted to influence the minds of men, than in any of their writings. How favourable this influence is to civil society, and how commodiously it falls in with the intention of human laws, will appear from the following considerations.

Private revenge is utterly repugnant to the principles, and directly opposite to the nature and end of civil society; and therefore condemned by the laws of all wisely constituted and well regulated governments*. No man, in a

state of civil society, is left at liberty to retaliate an injury, or take satisfaction of an offender, with his own hand and in a private way. In a well regulated government, the power of judging and punishing, in our own case, is taken from us. Laws are framed, to determine the criminality of injuries done by one individual to another, and to fix the kind of punishment to be inflicted. These laws are put into the hands of persons supposed to be indifferent, to be carried into execution: and to these we are to appeal for redress of injuries. According to the principles of civil society, therefore, it is criminal to take the punishment of an offender into our own hands, though we be never so much wronged. The wisdom

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* The judgment of zeal among the Jews, and the law respecting the avenger of blood, may perhaps be reckoned exceptions. As to the first, I am clear, it was not founded on scripture, in that latitude the Jews supposed. This, I think, must be evident to any one, who reads the account of it in Philo and Josephus. To what execrable purposes it was applied, appears plainly from the many attempts made on the life of our Saviour, the stoning of Stephen, and the diabolical conspiracy against the apostle Paul; for in these, and in many other instances, which might be mentioned, it appears to me most probable, that they proceeded under this pretence. The law concerning apostates to idolatry, which, the Jews tell us, was first executed by Phineas, gave rise to the judgment of zeal. But it cannot be made appear from that law, as it lies in scripture, that even idolators were to be put to death without a previous trial: an enquiry was to be instituted, and witnesses summoned. The case of Phineas was extraordinary; and whatever opinion we form of it, could not have been designed by God, to authorize every Jew to put to death, without delay, or any form of legal process, those who did or said any thing dishonourable to his religion. As to the Jewish law, which permitted a re-

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lation to take vengeance on a man-slayer, it was greatly moderated, and the sanguinary effects of it guarded against, by the asylums appointed for such as had been guilty of accidental homicide; for the avenger of blood was not at liberty to attack the homicide in his sanctuary. The design of it, was not to encourage men in a vindictive temper—but to inspire them with a horror of bloodshed; for by the risk, which they ran from the relations of the slain, and the hardship of confinement in the city of refuge, even when innocent, they were taught to be cautious, in avoiding every thing, that might endanger the life of a fellow citizen. However, if any one think this an exception to the above general assertion, I will not obstinately contend the matter here; for I am ready to allow, there are some exceptions. The laws of Sparta gave the ephori the right of putting persons to death without a trial. By a law of Solon, a husband who caught his wife in adultery, was at liberty to slay the adulterer on the spot. In some governments, masters and parents have been allowed the power of life and death, over their slaves and children. But whether these laws were wise and salutary, in any government, is a matter I

and necessity of this plan are obvious. One principal reason, why men cannot subsist in a state of nature, is their propensity too highly to resent, and too feverently to punish, every real or imaginary injury. Men are very improper judges in their own case. That pride, that selfishness, and false opinion of their importance, which is natural to them, render them wholly unfit to determine the real demerit of injuries done to themselves. It is scarcely possible for any man, entirely to divest himself of all partiality, in a case, where he is nearly concerned. Men of the most fair and upright minds are generally prejudiced in favour of their own relations and connexions: much more, then, must they be partial to themselves; and this partiality utterly disqualifies them from being proper judges, where they are parties.— Hence we see the impropriety of allowing men, in a state of civil society, to judge in their own case, and retaliate as they may think proper. This is the business of the common judge, constituted by society, and to be done agreeably to certain fixed laws, framed by

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very much doubt. They are, I think, reprobated by all christian states.

To prevent objections, I would further observe on this subject, that there are some extraordinary cases, in which the laws of England admit an extra-judicial remedy, and allow a redress of injury by the mere act of the party injured. Among these judge Blackstone reckons self-defence, recaption, abatement of nuisances, distress for rent, and cattle damagefeasant, with some others. The first of these is for the prevention, rather than redress, of wrong: for if the defender go further, than is necessary for defence and prevention, the law considers him as an aggressor. The last is not so properly redress, as the means of obtaining redress in a legal way; unless it be where the distress is retained for compelling satisfaction. Recaption indeed is, in a proper sense, redress; and removal of nuisances seems design-

common consent, for the redress of injuries. To this judge, and to these laws, we must appeal, when we are injured. He, therefore, who takes upon him to retaliate an injury, as he thinks fit, and to punish the offender, without such appeal, is guilty of an outrage on civil government, and stands condemned by the laws of society. The reader will please to observe, that we here speak of such injuries, and acts of revenge, as human laws can conveniently take notice of and punish; for there are innumerable instances of both, which civil society, from its natural imperfection, is obliged wholly to overlook. And in all such instances, men are under no restraint at all from civil laws, as will be shown hereafter.

A little attention to these observations may lead us to see, how well suited the above-mentioned precepts of christianity are, to co-operate with civil laws, and secure the peace and happiness of civil society. Our religion not only condemns all overt acts of revenge, but also prohibits that vindictive spirit, from which they flow. It strikes at the very root of all those evils, which spring from the malignant passions, the

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ed both for redress and prevention. Yet, even in these, the persons aggrieved act under the restraint and direction of law. Recaption must be without force or terror: nuisances must be removed peaceably, and without any riot. But notwithstanding these and some other instances, in which, on account of some peculiar circumstances, a well-regulated society may permit a kind of extra-judicial redress, I have not scrupled to affirm in general, that in a state of civil society, men are not at liberty to minister redress to themselves; and I have insisted the more largely on this, because, since the close of the war, I find many of my countrymen too much disposed to take the punishment of offenders into their own hands—a mode of proceeding, which directly tends to dissolve our government, and reduce us to a state of nature.

ferce contentions and mutual injuries, which are so destructive to our well-being in the social life. It forbids all those acts of revenge, which are the proper objects of human laws, and thus affords the most salutary assistance which they so much need. It goes further, and exerts its gentle influence, in restraining men from innumerable instances of revenge, which civil laws cannot reach, and therefore overlook. Men of a revengeful and malicious disposition may find a thousand ways, to gratify their resentment, and ruin their neighbours, without the least danger of punishment from human laws. An innocent man may be robbed of his estate, and, what is much more valuable, of his reputation, without being able to obtain the least legal redress. In a word, infinite mischief may be done to society, by deeds of revenge, which the laws of man can neither take cognizance of, nor punish. But christianity forbids all such acts, condemns the temper from which they arise, and refers the punishment of them to that Almighty and Omniscient Being, to whom belongeth vengeance.

He who hath felt the power of religion on his heart, and governs his life and temper by the precepts of the gospel, carefully watches against every emotion of revenge; much more, then, will he guard against suffering it to break out in those actions, which may be injurious to his fellow-citizens, even though he may have the prospect of escaping with impunity from men. He delights in the happiness and prosperity, not in the pain and misery, of others; and feels himself constrained, by an obligation, more powerful than all laws, to shun whatever may be hurtful to his neighbour, and detrimental to the public tranquillity. When he contemplates the example of the meek and lowly Jesus, who "when he was reviled, reviled not again;" and who poured out an ardent prayer for his enemies, even when they were shedding his blood; how does it animate him to subdue his resentment, and crucify every inimical passion! He does

not suffer himself to be transported with wrath, on every slight affront; but bears injuries with patience; conquers, by yielding; and shows himself superior to his enemies, by a meek, humble, and forgiving spirit. If, at any time, he see it absolutely necessary, for his own security, and the preservation of peace and good order in society, to resent an injury, he will do it from a sense of duty, and not to gratify a malicious and vindictive temper. He will not attempt to redress injuries, by taking private vengeance on the aggressor; but will appeal to the laws for his vindication: and even in this, he will discover a meek and quiet spirit, which shows, that he is prompted, not by a desire of revenge, but by a regard to justice and the public good. If the redress cannot be obtained in this way, he suffers wrong, and appeals to him, who will sooner or later vindicate the innocent, and punish the guilty.

If we would all thus conform to the precepts of christianity, what a happy society would we be! we would not see such fierce contentions, so much strife and animosity, so many instances of mutual injury and revenge, so much legal wrangling, and so many tedious and expensive law suits. If men, who call themselves christians, would consider the happy tendency, and listen to the rational dictates, of their religion, we would not see such tragical effects from slight affronts and petty provocations; nor hear of so much blood wantonly lavished, by that barbarous, Gothic custom of duelling, which prevails among some of our high-spirited gentlemen. This custom, so pernicious to civil society, and so directly opposite to the mild spirit of our religion, would be totally abolished. It is not a little surprising, that men, who pique themselves on their humanity and politeness, never reflect, that this practice is no refinement of modern times, but was brought into Europe by those fierce northern boors, who over-ran the Roman empire. The civilized heathens, the polite Greeks, and warlike Romans, were strangers to this

absurd, barbarous custom. They reckoned it glorious to die for their country; but never sacrificed each other in cold blood, to the little punctilios of honour. The prevalence of this practice, in christian countries, contrary to all the laws of religion, as well as reason and humanity, is one of the strongest proofs of the amazing force of custom on the human mind.

To conclude this particular,—as christianity surpasses all other religions, in that meek, gentle, and forgiving spirit, which it requires; so it must be, of all others, the best adapted to preserve peace among men, and promote the happiness of civil society.

(To be continued.)

Reflexions on the custom of burying the dead, and the danger of precipitate interment. Translated from the French of mr. Durande.—Page 227.

IT is not only in Europe, that precautions are taken against precipitate burials. In Asia, when an inhabitant of the kingdom of Boutan dies, the body is kept in the house three days, all of which are spent in singing and prayers.

If we, instead of following the example of those people, have forgotten that respect which the ancients entertained for the dead, it is owing to the prejudices of our education, imbibed in infancy. In that early age, nurses and ignorant servants instil into children, those absurdities, which they themselves have adopted; and such prejudices are the most difficult to be overcome. Scarcely has one ceased to live, when he becomes an object of horror. The body is abandoned to a set of mercenary people, who begin by dragging it from a warm bed, to place it on some cold straw. Soon after, the desire of gain draws together the undertakers, who first cover the head and face with a kind of cap, in shape of a bag. Sometimes they put cotton into the mouth, the ears and even into the fundament, if the last precaution has not been taken before their arrival. This cotton is placed there to prevent the

body from staining the linen in which it is wrapped up. They then bind the breast and arms round with a bandage, and make another pass round the lower part of the belly; the latter comprehends the arms from the elbows, and serves also to enclose the feet; after this, the undertakers wrap up the whole body in a sheet, which they fix at both the extremities, and either sew or fasten it with pins, observing always to confine the body as closely as they can. It is thus that a man is prepared for his coffin; but it would be difficult to pursue a more pernicious method, even if one had an intention of accelerating death, or of rendering it impossible for a person to return to life.

The cold, to which a dying man is exposed, that he may not dirty himself, is attended with the greatest danger; for while the sphincter remains in contraction, there exists within us some remains of irritability, and consequently of life. The discharge of the intestinal matter, is the *ultimum visæ*. Thus, whilst a child has not yet voided the meconium, the man-midwife, notwithstanding the most dismal symptoms, still hopes to recal it to life. On the contrary, the appearance of this excrement is considered by him as a certain sign of death. The stopping of the anus is attended with no less inconvenience, as it prevents the action of the parts, in which life still subsists; for the abbé Spalanzani has proved, that digestion continues for some time after a person's death. If these parts could afterwards recover force and irritability enough, to reanimate the other organs, the closing the anus would necessarily become an obstacle to their salutary action. The different situations given to a body, are sufficient, when it has arrived at the last degree of weakness, to cause or accelerate death. Of this, however, people are not sufficiently aware, when they take away the pillow from a dying person, which is often done, and place the body upon a straw matras. Besides, during life, there exhales continually from the cavities of the head, from the breast, and from the belly, a vapour, which is



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

WE are sorry the letter respecting the answer to Columbianus, did not arrive until the 28th inst. which was too late for insertion in the present number.

On re-examination, Philo-scribleus was found liable to several objections, which the editor, when he has the pleasure of seeing his esteemed friend, the writer, will point out to him.

Elegy on gov. Livingston, is under consideration.

Tullia's picture is too incorrect for insertion.

Jan. 31.

and thinks money better than friendship, good-humour, and all the amiable qualities which render life agreeable, he has reason to be perfectly satisfied with his uncle: if he is not, the old gentleman has done his part, to make him so, by shewing him, that according to his notions, kindness consists in giving money. For my part, if ever I should be a beggar, or break my bones, I may perhaps be glad to meet with your friend again: but as I hope, neither of those things are ever likely to happen to me, I am by no means ambitious of the honour of his acquaintance: his good qualities are nothing to me: and his bad ones are a plague to all, who come in his way."

"One may bear with them," replied Alcander, "where there is so much real worth. The whole world could not bribe that man to do a base action."

"So much the better for him," returned Hilario; "but really, as I said before, it is nothing to me: and after all, whatever excuses your good-nature may find for him, there must be something wrong in the heart, where the manners are so unpleasant."

"He has not a good temper," said Alcander: "and every man has not the same command over himself; but indeed he has a good heart: and if you knew him, as well as I do, you must love him, with all his oddities."

"His oddities are quite enough for me," returned Hilario: "and I desire to know no more of him; he might make me esteem him; but he could never make me love him. And it is very unpleasant to feel one of these, where one cannot feel the other."

Alcander could not but be sensible of the truth of many of Hilario's observations; he sighed in secret, for the friend, whose good qualities he valued, and whose foibles gave him pain; and could Curio have known what his friend felt for him at that moment, it might have gone farther, than all he ever read, or thought, upon the subject, towards correcting a fault, for which he often blamed himself, but which he still continued to indulge, and to imagine himself unable to subdue.

Perhaps neither of the parties, concerned in this dispute, were well qualified to judge as to the subject of it. Esteem and regard influenced the one, and added strength to his good-nature; while the other, whose patience was wearied out by the ill-humours of a stranger, of whose merits he was ignorant, was naturally disposed to view them in an unfavourable light. But such a conversation must induce every indifferent person to reflect on the important disadvantages of a quality, which could oblige a friend to blush for the person he esteemed, and could, at first sight, make an enemy of a man, by no means wanting in good nature—who came into company, with a disposition to please, and to be pleased—and whose disgust was occasioned by a disappointment in that aim.

Can such a quality be a matter of little consequence, which those, who are punctual in their duty in more essential points, may be permitted to neglect? Can it be a disposition, so strongly implanted in the heart of any man, that his utmost efforts cannot conquer it? The first supposition might furnish an excuse for giving way to any fault; since all may fancy, they have virtues to counterbalance it. The latter would reduce us almost to mere machines, and discourage every effort to reform, and improve the heart, without which, no real and solid virtue can be attained.

Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M., pastor of the presbyterian church at Salem in South Carolina. Written anno 1785.—Continued from Vol. VIII. Page 269.

NUMBER XI.

III. **T**HAT strict justice, which the precepts of christianity enjoin, is of the greatest importance to civil government.

The practice of justice is essential, not only to the happiness, but to the existence of civil society. The social union cannot subsist without some degree of it. It is the proper, and, in a large sense, the only object of civil laws. But although human laws be, in a manner, wholly occupied in preventing or punishing injustice, there are innumerable instances of it, which they can by no means reach. Experience daily teaches us, how easy it is, for men of crafty and designing natures, to evade the force of laws. The most flagrant acts of injustice may be committed, and the most scandalous frauds carried on, under umbrage of the best human laws. An artful villain may rob the widow and the fatherless, and be guilty of the most cruel oppressions; and yet "so deeply intrench himself behind the *letter of the law*, and so well fortify himself with *cases and reports*, that there is no coming at him." It is needless to enlarge here. Every one, who will give himself the trouble of thinking on this subject, must be sensible, that the commerce of men, in a state of society, admits of so many different modifications, and that so many unexpected circumstances often arise, from the various methods of acquiring and transferring property, that no laws can be framed so as to comprehend every case which may occur. This shows the imperfection of civil laws, even with respect to those things, which are most in their power; and at the same time demonstrates the importance of religion to enforce the observance of strict justice.

The precepts of christianity require the strictest regard to justice, in all its branches. All those acts of fraud and injustice, which are prohibited by the laws of society, are also prohibited by the precepts of our religion. The christian, therefore, who is influenced by those precepts, is under a two-fold obligation, to restrain him from all acts of injustice; one, arising from the laws of his country—the other, from the laws of his religion: and the latter not only tends to facilitate the execution of the former, but often prevents the necessity of their exertion. He, who is bound by the obligation of religion, superadded to that of human laws, is more likely to practise the rules of justice, than he who is influenced only by a regard to those laws.

But this is not all—Our religion goes further, and extends to all those acts of injustice, which are beyond the reach of human laws, and cannot be punished by them. That these are numerous, even where justice is most carefully and impartially administered, is matter of universal experience. And that they are injurious to civil government, by creating the bitterest animosities among fellow-citizens—stirring up strife, malice, hatred—and so destroying that mutual love and confidence, which are necessary to hold men together in the social state, is too plain, to need any proof. As far, therefore, as christianity restrains men from these acts of injustice, so far it must tend to the benefit of society.

The precepts of christianity, which respect the practice of justice, are given in the most universal terms—"Whatsoever things are just"—these the christian is commanded to practise.—"All things, whatsoever ye would, that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."—This precept of our Saviour, on account of its excellence, is called the golden rule. It is concise, and easily remembered; plain and easily understood; comprehensive, and, with proper modifications, applies to all men, at all times, and in all circumstances. It is a portable directory, if I may so express it, which every man may carry in his own breast. It is an unanswerable appeal to the feelings of every man, and carries immediate conviction to the mind; enforcing and awakening, by the authority of heaven, those natural sentiments of justice, which are engraved on our hearts. He, who believes the divine authority, and duly feels the force of these, and such like precepts of our religion, will pay a sacred regard to the practice of justice in its various branches. He will be honest and upright in all his dealings, faithful to his trust, and give to every man his due. Where the laws are silent,

he finds a rule of right, and standard of equity, in his own breast, which points out the fair line of conduct he ought to pursue. He will not impose upon the ignorance and simplicity, or take advantage of the open and unsuspecting temper, of his neighbour. He does not lie in wait, to seize every open door, which the imperfection of civil laws may give him, to invade the property of others. It is not enough for him, that he can evade the force of civil laws, and escape punishment from men, while the laws of religion, and his own conscience, condemn him of injustice. His fair, open, and upright mind abhors all those little low acts of chicanery and knavery, which those, who regulate their conduct only by human laws, so often employ, to over-reach, rob, and ruin the honest and the unwary. He has a higher standard, and a more accurate rule of action, which restrains him from all unfair and fraudulent dealings, all dishonest shifis, and unequitable subterfuges. If such a temper as this, were generally prevalent among us, what desirable effects would it produce! How much would it tend to promote peace and concord—and, of consequence, the happiness of our states! We would not then see so many disputes about property, and so much money given to the gentlemen of the bar, to decide our quarrels; nor hear so many curses poured out upon them. If the precepts of christianity had that influence upon us, which their excellence naturally leads us to expect, there would be little need of that order of men, who are now so generally—I will not say, how justly—the objects of envy and execration among us. Were I permitted to speak my mind freely on this subject, I would say, that, generally speaking, people ought to blame themselves, for suffering these men to drain them of their cash. If they were of that temper, which becometh christians, they would not so frequently fall into contentions, or they would take some other method of compromising them, which might be more cheap and eligible. They might refer the decision of them to a few honest and impartial neighbours, who are acquainted with the merits of the cause; which they are often obliged to do, after they have spent their time, and emptied their purses by a tedious suit at law.

But I have not room here, to point out the many happy consequences, which would flow from that strict regard to the practice of justice, that our religion inculcates. Leaving the judicious reader to trace them in his own mind, I proceed to make some observations, concerning that religious adherence to truth, which the precepts of christianity enjoin. This is an important branch of justice, and very properly comes in here.

How excellent soever the rules may be, which the heathen moralists have laid down, for the practice of justice, they appear to have been very defective in this particular. It is not easy, indeed, to reconcile them to each other, or even to themselves on this point. Plato in some places condemns lying; in others, he seems plainly to approve of it. But the most general opinion, as far as I can find from their writings, was, that lies are admissible, where there is a prospect of advantage*. At least all their most eminent philosophers held it as an undoubted maxim, that it was lawful, and even a duty, to lie for the public good

NOTE.

* "He may lie," says Plato, "who knows how to do it in a fit season." To the same purpose Menander, Proclus and Herodotus. "There is nothing comely in truth," says Maximus Tyrus, "but when it is profitable. And sometimes a lie profits, and truth hurts men." "Plato and the Stoics framed a kind of sophistical distinction on this head, making a difference between lying in words, and in the soul, or with assent to a falsehood. The wise man was admitted to lie craftily, and with a prospect of gain; but not to embrace falsehood through ignorance." What a door such doctrines open to fraud and deceit, and how destructive they are of confidence among men, is sufficiently evident.

Cicero is so clear in this, upon the authority of Plato, that he pronounces it *nefas*, a horrid wickedness, not to do it. This conclusion arose from another equally true, namely, that truth and general utility do not coincide.

Christianity grants no such licence; but condemns every species of falsehood, and indicates the most sacred regard to truth, in all circumstances whatsoever.—“Lie not one to another. Putting away lying, speak every man the truth with his neighbour.”—I suppose it will be readily acknowledged, that a strict adherence to truth, especially in such promises and declarations, as respect the interest of others, is of no small consequence to society. It certainly tends to beget and maintain that mutual confidence, which has been always reckoned one principal bond of the social union.—This is evident from the pernicious effects, which we daily experience from an opposite conduct. Nothing has a greater tendency to plant distrust and suspicion in the hearts of men, destroy mutual love, and stir up malignant passions among them, than the practice of falsehood and dissimulation. It is therefore of the greatest importance in society, that men should be laid under all possible restraints in this respect. If they were left at liberty to depart from the truth, in some particular cases, and on *some* extraordinary occasions, for their own advantage, or even for the good of others, what would be the consequence? Would it not necessarily tend to annihilate all faith, in *every* such case? If men universally thought it lawful to lie in certain given circumstances, no one would be credited in those circumstances; because he would not be considered, as under any obligation to speak the truth. All faith in the declarations of others depends on the supposition of a general obligation to truth. Take away this supposition—and there is at once an end of all confidence. So that lying, in all such circumstances, would defeat its own purpose, and would be of no advantage, either to ourselves or others. It ought therefore to be reckoned a peculiar excellence of our religion, that its precepts afford not the least encouragement, to suppose it allowable, in any case whatever, to swerve from the truth. Had christianity granted any such permission, it might be made an objection against it, as giving countenance to a practice detrimental to civil government.

(To be continued.)

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Revolutions of English literature—translated from the Italian of signor Carlo Denina,

Under Edward III. Richard II. and Henry VIII.

AT the same time that in Italy Leo the tenth and Paul the third, and in France, Francis the first, encouraged literature by their bounty; Henry the eighth, in the beginning of his reign, was equally favourable to the learned, equally dear to the republic of letters. Ludovicus Vives and Erasmus, the principal restorers of taste in Europe, lived some time in England under that prince; and, by the patronage of queen Elizabeth, and the works of Bacon and Shakespeare, letters soon after became firmly established. Bacon, so deservedly famous for those seeds of science, which he so liberally diffused, and which afterwards produced such an abundant harvest, was likewise of singular advantage to literature. He was among the first who wrote upon serious subjects in the vulgar language, which, after incredible alterations, began, in his days, to assume a form little different from what it still retains.

Till now England had produced no writer superior to Chaucer, who died about the year 1400, and flourished under Edward III. and Richard II. The signal victories which the former obtained over the Scots and French, had introduced plenty and magnificence. There were in the court of that monarch, besides English and foreign noblemen, three powerful sovereigns. So happy, so glorious a reign, could not fail to promote, together with the other arts, the study



THE
A M E R I C A N M U S E U M,
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Strictures of Lilliput, by the late gov. Livingston—Remarks on a passage in dr. Price's observations on the American revolution—Verfes to the memory of gov. Livingston, shall appear in our next.

“Enquiry into the best means of encouraging migration from abroad,” is received, and under consideration.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth numbers of the Columbian Observer, are received.

B. C. is inadmissible.

Crito's hint shall be attended to.

Errata in our last number.

IN the mean elevation of the barometer for 30 2 7 read 30 1 12. In the thermometer, greatest degree of heat, dele the last figure and the 0, at the end of the amount exhibiting the least degree of heat, variation, and temperature.

In the observations on the weather and diseases for the last month, page 6 line 30, for blisters read clysters.

the distinguishing mark of his nation. The sight recalled the happy hours which I had passed with the man who was so dear to me. Tears bathed my face. My heart, so long oppressed, expanded itself. I wept abundantly: and by this blessing of nature perhaps saved a life which might have yielded to the weight of concentrated grief.

In effect, I found myself more tranquil. Reason returned. I began to regard every thing around me: the desire of making my escape was the result of all my reflexions.

The execution of it was not easy. Even though I should be able to elude the vigilance of my guards, how should I traverse an unknown land without being discovered? How should I find the road which led to my country? would it not be prudent for me to wait for more favourable occasions? By degrees, the mistrust of my guards would be weakened. I should be less observed. I might acquire a more exact knowledge of the country; and execute with success that which now appeared impossible.

Thus spoke prudence to me; but love and youth did not reason thus. The least delay appeared an injury to my passion. To hesitate, when the question was to rejoin Amelia, seemed an infidelity. "She will believe," said I, "that fear is superior to love; that my life is nearer to me than my affection. No, my dear Amelia! no! you shall never reproach your lover with having sacrificed to his safety, the happy instant which may hasten the delight of returning to you."

(*To be continued.*)

Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church at Salem in South Carolina. Written anno 1785.—Continued from page 35.

NUMBER XII.

IF the religious observance of truth, in our ordinary communications, be of so much importance in society, as we have already seen, much more must this be the case in our solemn oaths. Here, also, the excellence of christian morality is apparent. "Other laws," saith the learned Grotius, "forbid perjury: but this requires us to abstain even from an oath, without necessity; and so to cultivate truth in all our words, that an oath may not be required of us." The precepts of christianity are so strict in this particular, that some christians, of weak and scrupulous minds, have supposed they prohibit all oaths. But this is a very erroneous conclusion. It might be easily shown, were it thought necessary, that they contain no such prohibition. Those, who raise such scruples, little consider how much they wrong christianity. It would be a sad reflexion on our religion, if it condemned the use of solemn oaths, which are so absolutely necessary to the administration of government, and one of the best means for the speedy decision of controversies, which tend to the destruction of society. But though christianity does not forbid us to swear in a solemn manner, when legally called to it, it enjoins great caution in this matter. It teaches us not to be precipitate in making such a solemn appeal, where the importance of the case does not evidently demand it. Thus the precepts of our religion conduct us safely between two extremes, guarding us, on the one side, from perjury, and, on the other, from that superstitious timidity, which would lead us to omit a duty that we owe to society.

Perjury is, in itself, a crime so horrid, and at the same time so pernicious to government, that it ought to be guarded against with the utmost care. It is of great moment, therefore, that men should be restrained from every thing which tends this way. Lying, profane swearing, and even a needless and too frequent

use of lawful oaths; have this tendency: and as all these are prohibited by the precepts of christianity, those precepts must be one of the greatest securities against perjury; and, of consequence, singularly useful to government. A little attention to human nature may convince us, that a needless repetition of oaths tends to lessen their solemnity. By being often used, they become familiar; and are not attended with that awe and reverence, which ought to strike the mind, in a transaction so very solemn. And when men are but little impressed with a sense of the majesty and presence of the Deity, they will not pay that sacred regard to truth, which might be otherwise expected. Hence flows a political maxim, of no small utility in government; namely, that oaths should be admitted in as few cases as possible, and administered with all those circumstances of solemnity which are best adapted to fill the mind with awe and reverence.* As to the absurd and impious practice of profane swearing, which so much prevails among us, it evidently tends to banish all fear of God from the minds of men; and, of consequence, leads directly to perjury. The least reflexion may convince us of this.—Is it reasonable to expect, that an impious wretch, who is daily invoking the vengeance of heaven on himself and others, and who confirms every petty asseveration, whether true or false, by the addition of the sacred name—is it reasonable, I say, to expect, that such a one should have a proper sense of the solemnity of an oath, or any suitable dread of perjury?—Must it not be allowed, that, other things being equal, the testimony of a man, who makes conscience of taking God's name in vain, has much greater weight, and deserves more credit? It is, in a manner, self-evident, that an habitual profanation of God's holy name, by impious oaths and curses, must tend to lessen that awe and reverence of him, which is one of the strongest guards against perjury; and, consequently, must be, in a high degree, injurious to civil society. Hence the propriety of restraining and punishing it by civil laws.

If this practice were only an offence against God, the punishment of it should be referred to him alone: but as it is not only a daring impiety, but also productive of effects baneful to the state, and detrimental to public good, the civil magistrate ought to take notice of and refrain it by civil penalties. Indeed, every man, who wishes well to his country, should make it his business, to discountenance this vice, which is now become so common amongst us. It is the opprobrium of some of the states; and, together with our other national crimes, likely to call down the vengeance of heaven upon us. If gentlemen, whose wealth and

NOTE.

* I have often observed, with much concern, the method, in which juries are qualified in our courts of justice. No good reason, I think, can be given for the usual practice of swearing them previously to every trial. It appears to me a needless repetition of oaths, which necessarily takes off from their solemnity. Would it not be much more eligible, to qualify our juries once for all, at the commencement of the session? I take the liberty also to observe here, that oaths are not administered in our courts, with that solemnity, which their nature requires. The clerk, with a vacant face, and careless air, rhymes over the words of the oath, without any emphasis of expression, or solemnity of manner, suitable to the occasion. The same marks of negligence and inattention may be often observed in the countenance of the deponent. To a spectator there appears nothing serious, nothing solemn, in the whole transaction. One great cause of this I take to be a too frequent and unnecessary use of oaths, which tends to turn them into mere farces. These observations may, perhaps, by some, be thought trifling; but, to a thinking person, nothing will appear so, which serves to guard against perjury.

rank give them respectability, would conspire, and by their influence and example, discountenance this dialect of devils, it might, in a great measure, be banished from among us. But while men of the first figure, whose commanding manners have such a mighty influence on all the inferior ranks, lead the way—and those, who have a principal hand in making and executing our laws, are too often chargeable with a breach of them, by the practice of common swearing—we are not to expect much effect from the operation of our laws against profaneness. Indeed these laws are so seldom put in execution, that they might almost as well be expunged from our code. If a justice of the peace, in compliance with his oath, should attempt to punish profane swearing, he would in many parts of America make himself ridiculous. It is with regret I mention these things. But they are as true, as they are lamentable; and in the mind of every thoughtful man, who wishes well to religion and his country, portend no small evils. In truth, if the principles and precepts of religion be not sufficient to restrain men from falsehood, profanity, perjury, and other enormities of this nature—we cannot expect much aid from civil laws, which, though executed ever so faithfully, can seldom punish crimes of this sort. However, if men have so far thrown off all fear of God, that no sense of religion can deter them from this daring impiety, let them, at least, show some respect to reason, and relinquish a custom, which brings them neither honour nor profit, and is attended with the most pernicious consequences to civil society. If they profess themselves lovers of their country, and friends to public happiness, let them act a consistent part—let them, from political motives at least, if from no other, discountenance a practice, which tends to the destruction of both. (To be continued.)

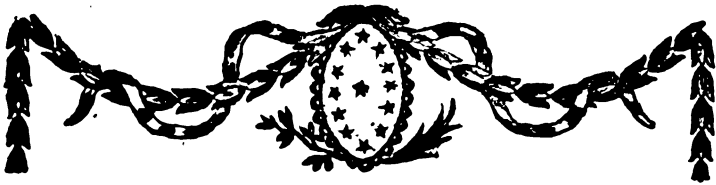
ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF WORN-OUT LANDS,

By deep trench and frequent ploughing.

Communicated to "the Blockley and Merrion Society for promoting agriculture and rural economy,"—by Richard Peters, Esquire, president of the said society. Concluded from 53.

TO perform the operation of trenching, which is unnecessary above once in seven years, I have a plough in the common form, but large and strong—the mortise in the beam long, so as to admit of altering the inclination of the coulter, as you would wish to go deeper or shallower; and the mould-board is constructed so as to cast off more earth than the common plough. With this plough, drawn by two oxen and two horses, or four of the former, I begin by running as deep a furrow as possible. The next operation is made with a light plough and two horses; which pares off the sod two inches deep, with a broad furrow, turning this sod into the trench with all its weeds, roots, and other pests to your soil. These are completely covered by the large plough, somewhat narrower than the small one, and which running in the same furrow, throws over a body of earth, which buries these nuisances; most of which, being placed beyond vegetation, ferment, rot, and become blessings, by adding to the fertility of the soil. The depth from ten to fourteen inches, as your soil will bear. This, when I can do it, I have finished before winter. Next season I give it a light dressing with lime, dung, or such other manure as I can obtain, and work it well with Indian corn, the most common fallow crop we have.

In trenching, I am satisfied if I complete three quarters of an acre in a short day, though sometimes I do more. My plough runs, in the years succeeding the trenching, no deeper than is required in good common ploughing, perhaps five or six inches. I frequently sow buckwheat, and plough it in, when in full blossom, as a green manure and covering crop. I have raised potatoes, tap



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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S.

We are sorry to have been obliged to defer the remarks on a passage in dr. Price's observations. They shall appear in our next. The future correspondence of the patriotic writer is requested.

The sketch of the life and character of Daniel Benezet, with some other of the valuable communications from the Franklinian society, which were intended for the present museum, shall also appear in our next.

L.'s essay on the eternity of the Deity is received.

Dr. Franklin's three fables shall be inserted in due course.

Letter from a gentleman on the death of his wife—lines on the departure of a young lady from the neighbourhood of her lover—and J. J.'s observations on the fourth article of the definitive treaty of peace—are under consideration.

The anecdotes by incognita, are too puerile

The humour of the petition of the letter U. has been anticipated in petitions of a similar kind, already published.

forget, that the consequence is falsely deduced; because, agreeably to the same natural law, the liberty of man is an unalienable right, which can neither be bought nor sold. To these two descriptions of men, at once the authors and witnesses of your wrongs, may be added the European traders who exchange their merchandise for the productions which are raised by your labour. You will conceive, that an immense profit could alone engage them in such a commerce, and that it is their interest carefully to preserve the source of it. Judge if the truth be likely to pierce through such a medium to Europe. Perhaps Europe would not yet have been interested in your fate, if leisure, and a thirst for knowledge had not led into our islands some philosophic minds who saw and reported your wrongs.”

(*To be continued.*)

Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Keefe, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church at Salem, in South Carolina. Written anno 1785. Continued from page 109. NUMBER XIII.

III. **T**HAT temperance, and that moderation, which the precepts of christianity require, are of great importance to civil society, and evidently tend to promote the public good.

It is a trite observation, that society, by cultivating the arts of life, greatly increases our wants; and consequently inflames our appetites in proportion. The wants of nature are few, and easily supplied; but those created by society, which may be called artificial, are without bounds or number. In the social state, therefore, where men's wants are so numerous, and the desire of satisfying them so highly excited, temperance and moderation must be peculiarly necessary. It is too plain, to need any proof, that by far the greater part of those evils, which disturb society, flow from the immoderate appetites and ungoverned passions of men. An immoderate desire of those things, which have, at least, the appearance of natural good, and which are generally thought necessary to our happiness in polished life, is the source of numberless civil crimes: A too eager and violent pursuit of wealth, honour, power and sensual gratification, prompts men to rapine, violence, cruelty, oppression, and every species of injustice. Hence flows a long train of evils, which bring a consumption on the body politic, destroy public happiness, and overturn kingdoms and empires. The principal design, therefore, of civil laws, is to check the fury of exorbitant appetite, to restrain the unruly passions, and to keep them within the bounds, which reason and the common good require. How imperfectly they answer this design, and how much they need the aid of religion for this purpose, the experience of all ages is a sufficient proof. All the restraint, which civil government can lay upon the passions, is but to prohibit and punish some of their most dangerous effects: but religion, by enjoining a due government of all our appetites, teaches us to eradicate from our minds the very cause of those effects. *That* only lops off some of the most noxious branches; *this* strikes at the root: *that* only counteracts or diverts the streams; *this* dries up the source.

Temperance is a very comprehensive virtue; and, as enjoined by christianity, not only requires a certain moderation in eating and drinking; but in all those affections, pursuits and enjoyments, which are liable to become faulty by excess. He who professes to govern his life by the precepts of the gospel, must be temperate in all things. His moderation must be conspicuous to all, and visible in the whole of his deportment. Thus exhorts the inspired apostle: "Let your moderation be known to all men." But though our religion so strictly prohibits all kinds of intemperance, it allows us a free use of the gifts of Providence, and denies us of no pleasure or enjoyment, which is not injurious to ourselves, or prejudicial to others. The stoic philosophers, who have said to

many excellent things on temperance—and whole morality, in the opinion of Jerome, came nearest to the christian—absurdly taught, that the passions ought to be wholly eradicated. According to them, all the tender emotions of love and pity, all the sweet sensibilities, and melting affections of nature, must be extinguished as unworthy of a philosopher. Thus, before men can become wise and virtuous, they must divest themselves of all the tender feelings of humanity, and be transformed into statues. How much more excellent and reasonable the precepts of christianity! They require us not to eradicate, but to govern and regulate our passions, in such a manner, as is most worthy of the dignity, and most conducive to the perfection and felicity, of rational creatures. They point out the objects, on which we ought to fix them; mark the degree in which they should be indulged; and show their due balance and subordination. Were it possible for men to bring themselves to that total insensibility, which was the pride and boast of the stoic, it would deprive them of a great part of that happiness, which they derive from a reciprocal exchange of kind affections, and mutual offices of love, which constitutes one of the principal bonds, as well as chief felicities of social life. How well soever the doctrines of the stoics, were, in general, calculated to form the good citizen, the dogma we are now speaking of, not to mention other paradoxes which they held, was far from being favourable to society. Had the retortion of nature permitted their much-desired apathy, they would have made very awkward members of the community. Reason is too weak, to rouse men to that vigour and activity, which are necessary for the discharge of the social duties. The impulse of the passions is therefore requisite; and they are implanted in us for this purpose. The vessel, which is stripped of its sails, though the rudder be ever so good, is not likely to reach the port. What sails are to a ship, passions are to the man. Let them be under the conduct of reason—give them the due tone—keep them within the bounds of moderation, which christianity prescribes—and they will invariably tend to social happiness. Thus tempered and restrained, they are a principal source of social enjoyments; give the necessary spring and energy to civil life; and impel us only to such actions and pursuits, as serve at once to promote both private and public good. Hence we see, how far the morality of the gospel surpasses that of the *Porch*, the most celebrated, and indeed the most perfect, to be found among the heathen sages. It is more conformable to the constitution of our nature, better adapted to our present condition, and has a greater tendency to promote the ends of civil government.

I suppose, it will be readily acknowledged, that drunkenness, gluttony, and lawless lust—not to mention many other evil consequences which flow from them—enervate the body, debase the mind, and tend to unfit us for the discharge of those duties which we owe to society. As far, therefore, as the precepts of christianity restrain men from these vices, so far they must be useful to government. We have no laws, at least none which operate, for the punishment of drunkenness, though it is detrimental to the state, by introducing diseases, destroying the health and vigour of its inhabitants, and reducing thousands of families to want and misery. As to those against uncleanness, they are so seldom carried into execution, that we might almost as well be without them. If, therefore, men be under no restraint from religion, they are left at full liberty to abandon themselves to those vicious courses. A regard to credit and reputation, or a dread of infamy, cannot restrain men from such practices, where they are so common as not to be disgraceful; and where the number of transgressors empties them from censure or reproach. How far this is the case in many parts of our country, I leave others to say; and only remark, that the scenes of lewdness, riot, and debauchery, common in town and country, are too plain a proof of our dissolute manners, and a melancholy preface of approaching ruin. I am

sensible, we have no small number amongst us, and those too of high rank and political influence, who make light of these crimes: but it is not less true, that they are attended with effects highly dangerous to government, and open a wide door to a groupe of political evils, which menace destruction to our country. Whatever men of loose morals may think of these things—to those, who consider their pernicious tendency, they are sufficiently alarming, and clearly indicate the necessity of a reformation. All that can, ought to be done by civil laws for this purpose; but I am persuaded that nothing, but a sense of religion, and a regard to the precepts of christianity, will prove effectual.

But, not to dwell any longer on those instances of intemperance, which are a reproach to reason, and transform men into brutes; we proceed to observe, that the moderation which christianity enjoins, in the pursuit of wealth, greatly tends to the advantage of society. Avarice is insatiable, and productive of infinite mischief in government. The most numerous and flagrant acts of injustice, and the most atrocious crimes, even murder itself, may be often traced to an immoderate desire of riches, as their source. Experience confirms the assertion of the apostle, "The love of money is the root of all evil." As an immoderate love of wealth, therefore, is one principal source of those crimes, which plainly tend to the subversion of society, it is of great moment, that it should be curbed; and whatever has a tendency to keep it within proper bounds, must be subservient to the public good. Christianity gives us such a striking picture of the empty and unsatisfying, as well as dangerous, nature of riches, as cannot fail to have a mighty influence on the minds of all those, who have a cordial belief of its truth. He, who has a full conviction, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," and pays a due regard to those divine precepts, which forbid us to set our hearts on earthly possessions, will be moderate in his pursuit of riches. Sensible of their uncertain and ensnaring nature, he will be under little temptation to use fraud or violence, in order to acquire them. Contented with food and raiment, he is not anxious to amass great wealth; and if God please to prosper his moderate care and diligence, and bless him with abundance, he has a heart open to distress, and is ready to pity and relieve the miserable. Sensible that he is only a steward of the good things God has given him, and that he must be accountable for the use he makes of his estate, he is careful not to consume it in luxury, nor make it the fuel of lust. He keeps the golden mean between the miser and the prodigal; not hoarding up miserably, nor spending profusely, but contributing, according to his ability, to promote such designs as are useful to the public: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and instructing the ignorant. Such is the temper of the man formed upon the precepts of the gospel; and how admirably it is adapted to promote the peace and happiness of society, is too plain to need illustration. If this christian moderation were more prevalent among us, how many acts of extortion, oppression, fraud, and rapine—how much strife and contention, envy and emulation would it prevent! It would be a much stronger security, against these and a thousand other irregularities, than the dread of human laws, though framed with the highest wisdom, and executed with the greatest punctuality.

(To be continued.)

M A X I M.

TO do the best, can seldom be the lot of man. It is sufficient, if, when opportunities are presented, he be ready to do good. How little virtue could be practised, if beneficence were to wait always for the most proper objects, and the noblest occasions—occasions that may never happen, and objects that may never be found?



THE
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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE editor has never seen the essay on the subject of a mint, respecting which a verbal message was sent him.

J. J.'s poetry is uninteresting.

Method of raising and keeping swine is under consideration.

Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reefe, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church, at Salem in South-Carolina.—Written anno 1785—Continued from page 155.

NUMBER XIV.

CH R I S T I A N I T Y is not more favourable to government, by moderating our love of riches, than by enjoining an honest care and diligence as the means of acquiring a comfortable subsistence. Idleness, sloth, and negligence, in our several occupations, are as expressly condemned by our religion, as a too eager and violent pursuit of the world. Thus, we are guarded against two extremes, equally pernicious to society. Extreme poverty and want stimulate men to theft, robbery, and many other dishonest practices, highly injurious to the community. Those who are extremely poor, and those who are extremely rich, are generally the most vicious; and though their vices may be of different kinds, they are equally opposite to the public good. The mean in life is most desirable: and this is generally the result of that moderate care and diligence which the precepts of christianity require. Those, who are placed between the extremes of want and abundance, are generally the best members of society, most happy themselves, and contribute most to the happiness of others. Over-grown estates are seldom acquired or enjoyed in a manner wholly consistent with christianity. They are often a curse and incumbrance to their owners, and a source of many evils in society, by introducing luxury, sensuality, and effeminacy, with a long train of vices, which have always been the destruction of governments; and are peculiarly repugnant to the spirit, and hostile to the liberty and happiness, of a republic. But as it is a thing possible, that men may both acquire and possess ample fortunes, consistent with the christian character and the happiness of the community—and as such have it in their power to be most extensively useful, both to the public and individuals—christianity is of singular service, in restraining them from the abuse, and fixing the true use of riches.

This naturally leads us to take notice of the influence, which christianity has in moderating our pursuit of those things, which are reckoned comfortable, elegant, and ornamental, in civil life.

It is not easy, precisely to ascertain, how far christianity permits us to indulge ourselves in the enjoyment of those things, which are not necessary to the support of nature; or to what degree we may innocently gratify an elegant taste, in magnificent buildings, sumptuous tables, splendor of dress, equipage, &c. This subject has been greatly embroiled by enthusiasts, who have cried out, an abuse, whenever the gifts of providence were used further than is necessary for the bare sustenance of life. It is needless to show the absurdity of this notion, and how little ground christianity affords for such a supposition. The bare necessary is reckoned sufficiently beggarly among us: and we have much more reason to guard against excess and intemperance, than a rigid austerly and superstitious abstinence. Though our bountiful Creator "hath given us richly all things to enjoy," and christianity permits us to use the comforts, conveniences, and even the elegancies of life, it requires a certain temperance and moderation in the enjoyment of these things. To suppose otherwise, would be unreasonable, and contrary to the spirit and general strain of its precepts. To use the gifts of providence to our own injury, in person or fortune, or to the injury of others, to whom we stand related, or are obliged to afford assistance, is prohibited by christianity. This, as I take it, is a pretty accurate definition of luxury, which is undoubtedly vicious, and as contrary to the precepts of our religion, as it is pernicious to civil society.—When a man indulges himself in sumptuous fare, so as to enervate his body and debauch his mind—when he gratifies his

taste for elegance, grandeur, and magnificence, in building, furniture, dress, equipage, &c. to such a degree, as to embarrass his estate, plunge himself in debt, and bring his family to beggary—he certainly passes the bounds of moderation, Imprudence is too soft a name for such a conduct—it is highly criminal. For by acting in this manner, he not only injures himself; but is chargeable with great injustice to others. Had he kept within the bounds, which religion, and even reason prescribes, he might have lived comfortably, though perhaps not splendidly, and have bestowed liberally on those, who, reduced by unavoidable misfortunes, had a right to share in his bounty. The man, who regulates his mode of living by a strict and conscientious regard to the precepts of the gospel, will always endeavour to manage his affairs with such economy, that his expenses may not exceed his income. Though he may have a taste for the grand and elegant in life, he will not always gratify it, even when in his power; but will often sacrifice the pleasures of imagination to the more sublime and godlike pleasure of relieving the real wants of the poor and needy. Although his estate may permit, and rank require him, to live in a magnificent and splendid manner, he will study moderation and simplicity, as far as is possible, without incurring the imputation of meanness. A regard to religion, the love of his country, and a desire to promote the public good, will lead him to this; left, by the influence of his example, luxury should be encouraged, and others carried into a train of expenses, which they cannot honestly support. In a word, the real christian, though he may possess an affluent fortune—to which you may add, if you please, a noble and refined taste—is careful to keep both in due subordination to the honour of God, and the good of men; and neither uses the one, nor indulges the other, to the detriment of civil society. All, who consider the fatal effects and dangerous tendency of luxury, will acknowledge, that, in this view, christianity is of great importance to the state. In all rich and flourishing republics, sumptuary laws have been generally thought necessary: but they seldom fully answer the end designed by them. A strict regard to that moderation, which christianity requires, would have much greater influence, and lay a more effectual curb on luxury, than the most rigorous sumptuary laws. How much we need the influence of religion, in this particular, is too plain to admit of a doubt. If luxury be an “abuse of the gifts of providence,” there is certainly a great deal of it among us. Our progress in this vice, has been so amazingly rapid, since the close of the war, that I could not believe it, were I not convinced by my own senses. The nature of our government, the losses we have sustained, and the debts we have contracted, in the course of a bloody and desolating war, call for the severest economy and the most exact frugality: and yet such is the profusion, prodigality, and extravagance, which generally prevail among our citizens, that a sagacious politician would be almost tempted to pronounce us in the last stage of political corruption. As free and independent states, we are but in infancy: and yet we have many flagrant marks of a republic in rapid decline. “We have luxury and avarice, no uncommon conjunction; public poverty, and private opulence*.” Profaneness, riot, dissipation, and debauchery have, in many places, arrived to a height

NOTE.

* “Nos habemus luxuriam atque avaritiam; publice egestatem, privatim opulentiam.” (Sallust.) Rome had existed nearly 700 years before the patriot could say this. In the early ages of the commonwealth, it was quite otherwise: “Partiæ enim rem unufquisque, non suam augere properabat; pauperque in divite, quam dives in paupere imperio, versari malebat.” Valerius Max. Such is the disposition which ought to prevail among us, in this early stage of our republic: but how far it is otherwise, no one can be ignorant, who is capable of the smallest observation.

which is truly astonishing. If, in the course of a few years, we be already so far gone in these vices, who can look forward, only one century, without trembling for posterity? Our rapid progress in luxury, which will naturally increase with our wealth and commerce, is an alarming circumstance, and a sure harbinger of impending ruin. We already begin to feel the fatal effects of our prodigality and extravagance. It is known to all, what great numbers of our citizens are involved in debt. Not a few of them are so irrecoverably sunk, that they have relinquished all hopes of payment. This is generally reckoned no small evil; and is, at this moment, the source of infinite discontent and uneasiness in the states. Whence arises this evil, so much complained of? We may, I think, pronounce without hesitation, that an immoderate desire of high and expensive living is the principal and most general cause. Our citizens seem to be seized with a general emulation to surpass each other in every article of expense. Those, who possess affluent fortunes, lead the way, and set the example. Others, whose estates are not sufficient to bear them out, madly adopt the same expensive system; and, in order to support it, contract debts, which they have no rational prospect of discharging. All they seem to wish, is to obtain credit, to figure away, and make a brilliant appearance at the expense of others. It is but too plain, that many of them enter into engagements, without the most distant prospect of complying with them. They make no efforts for this purpose; but plunge deeper and deeper into the vortex of extravagance. If they can only indulge their fondness for pleasure, show, and vanity, and shine upon the property of the honest and industrious, they care not what becomes either of their creditors or their country. Rich and sumptuous fare—expensive diversions—costly entertainments—the pomp, parade, and splendor of dress and equipage—these are the things, which have involved thousands; and, among other mischiefs, have obliged some of our legislatures to stop the course of justice; or, at least, to clog it in such a manner, that an honest creditor may starve, before he can recover his just due. Indeed there are a number of these desperate debtors, who seem determined to hazard every extreme, rather than discharge their lawful debts; for they are sensible, that, if they do this, they must retrench from their luxury, and many of them be reduced to beggary. At a certain period of the Roman republic, it was common for a bold tribune, who aimed at popularity, to propose a total abolition of all debts: and if the ruinous scheme of credit be continued, as in times past, I shall not be at all surprised, if such a motion be made in some of our assemblies. Something, which appears to me nearly tantamount, hath already been done. A paper currency, on depreciating principles, produces nearly the same effect.

The weight of our taxes is also a matter of great complaint; and none complain more heavily, than those who live most prodigally. You may hear a man cursing the assembly, and exclaiming against the tax, when the very silver on the trappings of his horse would pay his proportion of it. He can find money, to eat, and drink, and dress like a gentleman: he has guineas upon guineas, to stake at a horse-race or a gaming table: but not a farthing to pay his tax. Is it at all strange, that men of this cast cannot pay their public or private debts? If they would only retrench from their superfluities, and be frugal and industrious—if they would live within the limits of their income, and observe those bounds of moderation, which common prudence, reason, and religion require—most of them would find little difficulty in paying their taxes. Their extravagant taste for high and expensive living, is the principal reason, why they cannot, or rather will not, discharge their public dues. Every one who considers the heavy debts we have incurred by the war, must be sensible, that a weighty tax is necessary*. Honour, justice, and our own real interest, equally require, that this debt

NOTE.

* Those, who complain of the weight of our taxes, readily acknowledge the

should be discharged; and he, who refuses to sacrifice a few of the luxuries, or elegancies of life, for this purpose, discovers, in my judgment, very little of a republican spirit, as well as very little regard to honour and justice. A few years of economy, industry and frugality, would extricate us from all the difficulties, which arise from our debts, and make our public faith as respectable, as it is now contemptible. But it is not my design to insist on all the evils, which our extravagance has already brought upon us. Every one who will only reason a little on the subject, and trace effects to their causes, must be convinced they are numerous. The destructive tendency of luxury is a beaten topic; we shall not therefore repeat what hath been said by so many excellent writers on this subject. The history of the world points to this, as the rock on which the state vessel has most commonly split. It stands conspicuous; and if we run upon it with our eyes open, we deserve to perish. The majestic ruins of mighty kingdoms and empires, present themselves to our view, as an awful, but friendly warning of our danger from this quarter. Rome, once so famous for her contempt of wealth, her virtue, and her valour—Rome so renowned for the excellence of her civil institutions, and the wisdom of her policy—at last fell a sacrifice to luxury. The spoils of Greece, and the riches of the east, proved her ruin, and overturned that mighty fabric, which it had been the work of ages to rear. A general dissolution of manners took place—virtue fled—vice broke in, like an irresistible torrent.

—————*Sævior armis*—————

Luxuria incubuit, vilisumque ulciscitur orbem.

JUVENAL.

The judicious reader must be sensible, how easy it would be to enlarge here, by selecting many other precepts, besides those already treated, and showing their influence on civil society.

That strict regard to chastity and conjugal fidelity, which christianity enjoins—the prohibition of polygamy, which is allowed by other religions, and which is as contrary to the intention of nature, as it is unfavourable to public happiness—all those precepts, which point out and enforce the several duties, required of us in the different stations and relations of civil and domestic life, particularly as magistrates and subjects, rulers, and ruled*—all these so evidently tend to promote our happiness in the social state, that it may be thought tedious and unnecessary to insist upon them.

Upon the whole, what has been said, is, we trust, sufficient to demonstrate how admirably the christian religion is adapted to co-operate with good and wholesome civil laws, and how much it tends to promote the peace and happiness of men, in a state of society. Let us, for a moment, admit the supposition, that the doctrines of christianity were firmly believed, cordially embraced, and its

NOTES.

justice of discharging the debts, contracted by the war; but, at the same time, allege, that very little of our money is applied this way—that our civil list, which, they say, is enormous, swallows up the greater part; and, in general, that those, who have the management of our finances, lavish out the public money, without any regard to that severe economy, which our present situation requires. I do not take upon me to say, that this is the case; but if it be, it is a still farther proof, that the political grievances we labour under, are the consequence of extravagance, prodigality, and luxury. If the salaries of our civil officers be too high, the evil may be easily traced to luxury, as the original cause. If the public money be dealt out unnecessarily, and in such a manner as proves detrimental to the state, what is this but public profusion and extravagance?

* Strictly speaking, there are neither rulers nor subjects in the united states. We are all confederates. Those who are commonly called rulers, are more properly agents or trustees.

precepts diligently practised, by all our citizens; and it may easily be conceived, what a happy effect it would have. What love, what peace and harmony, what firm union, perfect order, and ready obedience to every wholesome institution and wise regulation, would then take place amongst us! To what an exalted pitch of true greatness, glory, grandeur, and felicity might we arrive! The bare thought is sufficient to transport every lover of his country. It is not, indeed, to be expected, that such a sacred regard to religion should ever become universal among any people; but from the effect, which would follow, on this supposition, we may see, that it must ever be productive of good to society, as far as it prevails. The more strongly men are influenced by its motives, and the more perfectly they are conformed to its precepts, the better members of civil society they will be: and the greater the number of such in any state, other things being equal, the higher it will rise in the scale of political glory and happiness. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." As vice degrades a nation, renders them contemptible, and at last terminates in public misery and ruin: so virtue, which is the necessary result of piety, exalts, ennobles, and leads them to true substantial glory and felicity.

'Tis fix'd! by fate irrevocably fix'd!

Virtue and vice are empire's life and death.

YOUNG.

(*To be continued.*)

THE NEGRO EQUALLED BY FEW EUROPEANS.

Translated from the French.—Continued from page 153.

"**T**HERE is then," said I, "among the Europeans a class of men so degraded, as not to blush at the inhumanity of their countrymen!"

"Ah! you do not know the eloquence of avarice. She borrows the voice and colours of fiction. Fiction gilds your chains; denies you almost every quality of men, to ennoble the preterted charity of your despots towards you; swells the list of dangers which they encounter to procure you; exaggerates the cruelty which you exercise on the white people who fall into your hands, and the stupid insensibility of your sovereigns who deliver you up for trifles which we despise. Thus does she seduce our monarchs by insinuating that this commerce aggrandizes their power; our great men, by multiplying the sources of their enjoyments; our people, by infecting them with the errors, which close their credulous minds to pity; thus does she betray even religion itself; and, by showing some of you to her, as objects of her dominion, compels her to consecrate the injuries with which injustice overwhelms you."—"Weak as these reasons are, at least they are excuses which falsehood may employ to palliate avarice: and I feel they may impose on people who enjoy the fruits of our slavery, without knowing the anguish which those productions cost us. But lying has no excuse. I cost your father nothing. I implored his humanity; nothing further. Was his character formed of unalloyed barbarity? he might have refused my request; have sent me back; and this should have been sufficient for his cruel propensity. But chains! slavery! shame! Oh, Ferdinand! the lions of our forest tear us; we kill them; but if they be not impelled by hunger, they do not seize upon us for future wants."—"Alas! my dear Itanoko, when long abuse, when luxury has taken the place of virtues, there is no point to which man confines himself; he dares every thing; he excuses every thing."

"I will tell you a truth, Ferdinand; it may be harsh; but, pardon me, I cannot dissimulate. If riches, which offer the means of solacing human miseries, have served to harden your minds—if the sciences, whose object is to enlighten men, have but increased your pride—if your compassionate religion has no influence on your hearts—you must be the most vile, the most corrupt of men! To pos-



T H E
A M E R I C A N M U S E U M,
O R U N I V E R S A L M A G A Z I N E,

F O R M A Y, 1791.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The sixth number of the Columbian Observer is the production of a young gentleman, a member of the Franklinian society, in which it was read. A. B.'s letter to Simon Spectacles is received. Several communications are under consideration.

ropeans, who think they dishonour themselves by admitting us to their society : but it was debauchery alone gave him this apparent philosophy. It depended then solely on my pleasure to be always with him : but his amusements were too far removed from my taste, to permit me to accept of an equality, to which my principles must have been sacrificed : I stood aloof, with a reserve which my situation seemed to require : and I was proud to have preserved my inclinations pure, and not to have stained the dignity of man by the condition of slavery.

(*To be continued.*)

Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thomas Reese, A. M. pastor of the third presbyterian congregation in Salem, South Carolina. Written anno 1785.—Continued from page 205.

NUMBER XV.

IF religion be of that importance to the state, which we have been endeavouring to prove, it certainly merits the public attention : and those, who are engaged in the arduous and important task of government, ought to avail themselves of its force, to give vigour to the operation, and facilitate the execution, of wise and wholesome laws. The most intelligent of my readers will perhaps blame me for taking so much pains, to prove what very few either doubt or deny. To this I can only say, that, how well soever the truths insisted upon are known and believed, it is clear they have been too much over-looked : and if what has been offered, may serve, in any measure, to draw the public attention to this important object, I shall not regret the labour I have bestowed. All our politicians will readily grant, that the morality of the people is a matter of no small moment, especially in republics : but many of them seem to forget the inseparable connexion between religion and morality. They appear not sufficiently sensible, how impossible it is, to preserve purity of morals among the people at large, even in the lax political sense of that expression, without a sense of religion. A complete morality, independent of all religion, is merely visionary ; and never, in fact, existed. It is the dream of theory spinners, and the unmeaning language of petty profligate politicians. The necessity of morality to the commonwealth being once granted, the necessity of religion will unavoidably follow ; and certainly that which is necessary, not only to the well-being, but to the very existence of civil society, must be worthy the attention of civil rulers. Without entering into any dispute relative to the power of civil magistrates in religious concerns, we lay it down as certain, that they may do much for the support and encouragement of religion, without the least encroachment on the prerogatives of those, who are more immediately entrusted with the government of the church. They may, and ought to do much by their pious example, which, in persons of high rank and authority, has an amazing weight and influence. They may, without any invasion of the rights of conscience, take measures for the instruction of subjects in the important doctrines and precepts of christianity, which so evidently tend to the safety of the body politic. If measures of this nature were ever necessary in any government, they are so in the united states. Great numbers of our citizens are ignorant of religion to a degree, which is equally astonishing and deplorable. Whole settlements may be found, where but very few can so much as read the scriptures. There are some hundreds,—one might venture to say, some thousands—of young persons growing up among us, almost as ignorant of the God who made them, as the Hottentots of Africa. Instructed in no one duty, which they owe either to God or man, is it reasonable to suppose, they will ever become good citizens or useful members of the community ? Brought up, as many of them are, in the most abject poverty, and the most

idleness, and taught no kind of employment, by which they can procure an honest subsistence; must we not expect they will prove pests of society? Restrained by no obligations of virtue or religion, stimulated by want, and sharpened by keen necessity, they give us but too much reason to expect, that in maturer years, they will be conspicuous for their vices, immorality, and dishonesty. Do we not find in fact, that those settlements, where idleness, ignorance, and irreligion, most prevail, are at once the seminaries and asylums of public offenders? Here the laws are not executed at all, or with the greatest difficulty: and in some of them, the people are scarcely one degree above downright barbarism. Is there any other method to bring them out of this state, and make them honest and worthy citizens, but the diffusing knowledge among them, and instructing their children in the principles of religion and morality? And is not this an object worthy of the public attention? Exclusive of that compassion to the souls of men, which should strongly operate with those who profess themselves christians, our own peace and happiness as a political body evidently require it. If parents either cannot, or will not provide for, and educate their children in a proper manner, it would certainly be just and expedient, to take them out of their hands, and have them brought up in such a way, as might afford some rational prospect of their being useful to society. This would be, at once, an act of charity and compassion to the children, and highly beneficial to the state.

One principal reason, why ignorance is so prevalent among our citizens, is the want of public teachers, properly qualified, to instruct them in the doctrines and precepts of christianity. If our country were properly supplied with able, pious, and faithful ministers, this would, doubtless, be one of the most promising means to diffuse religious knowledge, stem the torrent of vice, and promote the practice of piety and virtue. Without attempting to prove, I make no scruple boldly to affirm, that the preaching of the gospel, in its genuine purity and simplicity, is the most powerful mean to reform the manners of men. If so, is it reasonable to expect, that a reformation will take place, while this mean is neglected? Can we rationally hope, that a sense of religion will be kept alive in the hearts of men, when there are none among them, whose stated business it is, to explain its doctrines, and inculcate its precepts? It is the appointment of the great Author of our religion, that there should be such an order of men. And when they conduct themselves with that gravity and dignity, which become their office—when they are zealous, active, and diligent, in preaching, instructing, reproof—and, by their holy and exemplary lives, give weight and influence to their doctrines—we are authorized to expect the most salutary effects from their ministrations. Had we a sufficient number of such clergymen fixed in the different parts of the united states, it would be a singular blessing, and greatly facilitate the execution of our laws. Were this the case, we might expect, that our citizens would be more generally enlightened in the nature and end of government, and the several duties they owe to society, and more sensible of the necessity of order in the body politic, and of submission to all those civil ordinances, which are subservient to the common good.—Virtue would be more countenanced and promoted, vice more discouraged, and a stronger curb laid on the licentious and profane.

But how are such clergymen to be obtained? how supported?—Here rests the grand difficulty. We do not take upon us to dictate. We point out the influence of religion on civil society—the need we have of that influence; and give one reason, why we are so deficient in the knowledge and practice of christianity.

It may, however, be observed, that the most probable means of furnishing our country with useful pastors, is to promote learning, and educate pious and promising youths among ourselves. The encouragement of literature, on this,

and many other accounts, should be considered as a very capital object of public attention in America. It is neither for our honour, nor our interest, to have our learned departments filled up with foreigners. How far this is the case none can be ignorant. In some of the southern states, there is scarcely a single clergyman, who is a native. Of the few ministers in these states, it is to be lamented, that some are not so well qualified, in point of literature, as the importance of their office would require. Some of these are, no doubt, useful: but if their learning equalled their piety and zeal, they would certainly be much more so; and religion would be more solid and rational, than it is at present, in many places. The most able and judicious of these are sensible of the disadvantages they labour under, and lament their want of a liberal education: but at the same time, urge the difficulty of obtaining it, and the deplorable ignorance which prevails, as their excuse for assuming the character of public instructors. And in truth, considering the state of learning to the southward, and the scarcity of religious teachers, this argument appears to me to have no small weight. If such preachers were capable of nothing further than to inculcate the doctrine of a future state—and press upon men the necessity of moral and social duties, even this would be of no small utility to the state. It requires but little knowledge to instruct many of our citizens; and those, who can only read the scriptures in their own language, may do much good in many parts of the country, by teaching the grossly ignorant, and reforming the notoriously vicious. After all, it must be confessed, that they would be much more useful, were their knowledge more enlarged, and their education more liberal: and if a method could be devised, to make learning cheap and convenient, this would be more generally the case. This is the point, at which we ought to aim, and the most spirited efforts should be made for this purpose. While learning continues so expensive, as it is at present among us, we cannot expect it to become general. The more opulent only will be able to give their sons a liberal education: and there is little probability that any considerable number of these will devote themselves to the service of the church*.

NUMBER XVI.

IT is the opinion of many, that the best way to supply ourselves with clergymen, is to encourage their emigration from Great Britain and Ireland. In our provincial state, this plan was not altogether ineligible. but, in our present circumstances, I think there are strong political objections against it. An important revolution has taken place. We are now an independent people, and have rejected the government of Great Britain, as equally odious and intolerable. Those men, whom it is proposed to bring in among us, are the subjects of king George III; and, in justice to them, it is to be supposed they are loyal subjects. Their education has a deep tincture of the government, under which they have lived. They have been brought up, with that predilection for monar-

NOTE,

* If, as some think, our governments tend to aristocracy, were learning properly diffused, it might, I think, serve to counteract this tendency in some measure. In a republic, offices of high trust and preferment ought to be rotatory, and diffused as much as possible. If learning be confined to a few of the most wealthy, it will naturally tend to keep these offices in a few hands: the consequence of which will be, that the rich and learned few will rule and oppress the poor and ignorant many. Every proud politic aristocrat knows, that if he can keep a people in poverty and ignorance, he can ride them at pleasure; and will therefore strenuously oppose every attempt of the legislature, to put learning upon such a footing, that it may be acquired by those of lower rank.

chy, and that superstitious reverence for royalty, and the high-sounding *title of king*, which is usual in regal governments. Can we reasonably expect, that men of this description will generally have the same strong attachment to our country, the same high respect for our republican forms of government, as those who are educated among us, and have imbibed the principles and spirit of freedom and independence, with the milk of their mothers? have we any ground to hope, that they will show the same zeal, for the support and prosperity of our free constitutions, as the natives of America, whose fathers have suffered so much for their establishment?

Some of these gentlemen, who have ventured to cross the Atlantic, since the establishment of peace, and are now in quest of settlements among us, make no scruple to declare their hatred and contempt of our government; and to express their great regret that the revolution ever took place. "Better," say they, "we had still continued our connexion with England:—we would have now been a much more happy people." That they should hold such language is not at all surprising. It is the natural result of their education, and of the prejudices which hang about them in favour of a kingly government: and how plainly it tends to embroil our government, and facilitate our return to a servile dependence on Great Britain, is sufficiently obvious. Others, who have more prudence, and better know how to accommodate themselves to their interest, are silent on the matter. Few, if any of them, discover that cordial approbation of our government, or interest themselves in our welfare, with that ardour which we find in true republicans. Indeed it would be unreasonable to expect it. Suppose a considerable number of these foreign clergymen settled in different parts of the union—suppose them to be as respectable, as men of their function ought to be—and to have that influence on the minds of their people, which is necessary to render them useful—it is easy, I think, to see what might be the consequence to the state. How weak soever this objection may appear to some, it shows, at least, that, in a political view, it is most eligible to have a clergy well affected to our government: and the most probable method of obtaining such, is to promote learning in our own country.

As to the method of supporting our clergy, it seems to be the most general opinion, especially among those formerly called dissenters, that it should be by the free contributions of the people. And indeed no other mode appears more eligible, where people are generally sensible of the utility of religion, and disposed to contribute, according to their abilities, for its support. It ought, however, to be considered, that in many parts of America, the people have scarcely any idea of the necessity and importance of religion; and consequently will not exert themselves either to obtain or support public teachers. And yet, these are the people who most need instruction: What is to be done in this case? Can nothing, consistent with justice and the rights of conscience, be attempted by civil authority, to oblige persons of this description to contribute to the support of religion? If religion be of that utility to government, which we have been endeavouring to show, it will certainly follow, that every citizen reaps advantage from it, in a political view; and therefore, ought to contribute for its support. Nor is there any more injustice, in obliging him to this by law, than in obliging him to pay a public tax, for the support of government: because religion is absolutely necessary to government; and were it not for this, he would be deprived of those benefits, which he enjoys from the social union. We may, therefore, venture to affirm, that every member of civil society ought, and may be justly obliged by law, to pay something for the support of religion. Nor will there be any just cause of complaint, with respect to conscience, provided every one be left at liberty to pay to whatever denomination of the clergy he pleases. We do not take upon us to affirm, that such a law ought to be made: some dis-

difficulties would probably arise, in the execution of it. We only show, that such a law would have nothing in it unjust, were it thought expedient. If properly executed, it would, I think, have at least one good effect; it would excite people to make some efforts to obtain fixed clergymen among themselves. It is easy to foresee, that avarice on the one hand, and contempt of religion on the other, will raze up many objections against this plan: but as we only just throw out the hint, and are far from being sanguine on the matter, we shall not, at present, take any notice of these. There is, however, one objection, which, with me, has no small weight, and which, no doubt, will operate strongly with all those, who wish well to religion. If the law proposed, could be so framed and executed, as to afford support and encouragement only to the pious, sober, and diligent of all denominations, it would certainly be of singular service to the state: but the great danger is, that in some particular instances, those of the opposite character would probably be supported and encouraged. Could matters be so managed, as to guard against this, I should not hesitate a moment to pronounce such a law highly expedient and salutary. This may, perhaps, be difficult; and could I think it absolutely impracticable, I would be one of the last men in America, to propose, or consent to, a law of this nature. It would be an intolerable hardship, indeed, to be obliged to give our money for the maintenance of idle, ignorant, or vicious ecclesiastics. But however true this may be, if those, who so violently oppose every other mode of supporting religion, but by voluntary contribution, would properly consider the situation of our country, and what vast numbers there are among us, who neither do nor will assist in maintaining the teachers of religion, unless they be compelled by law—if, I say, they would consider these, and many other things, which might be urged, they would not wholly reprobate every attempt to encourage religion at the public charge: Christianity is the best religion in the world. There is no other so well adapted to the genius of a free and independent people, so favourable to liberty and the natural rights of men; nor is there any other which so commodiously falls in with that form of government, which we have pitched upon, the supreme end and sole object of which is the common good. Tyranny and oppression of every kind are condemned by its precepts, and utterly repugnant to its spirit. It must be corrupted, abused, and perverted, before it can be brought to speak the language of despotism, and give countenance to arbitrary power. There is not a despotic government on the face of the earth, where it prevails in any considerable degree of purity. We ought not, therefore, to spare a little cost and pains to support and encourage a religion so friendly to equal government and laws; and which so directly tends to promote the great designs of the American revolution. A sufficient number of useful pastors might be supported, with but very little expence to the public. I am none of those, who wish to heap wealth upon ecclesiastics, and make them wholly independent of the people. This would be highly impolitic, and the ready way to destroy their usefulness, by making them proud, luxurious, indolent, and negligent of their duty. But they certainly ought to have what is sufficient to keep them above that contempt, which, unhappily, among us, is too often connected with a certain degree of honest poverty. It requires little less than the resolution of a martyr, to undertake the sacred employment, where a man has no reasonable prospect of a maintenance for himself and his family. When the road to wealth and honour lies open to gentlemen of a liberal education, in so many other ways, we cannot reasonably expect, that many of them will prefer an employment, from which they can look for little else in this world but poverty and contempt. This is very much the case at present; and many persons seem to expect, that men will sacrifice every earthly consideration, to the desire of saving souls. It would be well, if they could find a sufficient number of this temper; but as

Christianity requires no such sacrifice, and gives those, who preach the gospel, a right to live by the gospel, few, I believe, will think it their duty to relinquish that right, and engage in a work, at once so arduous and painful, without some hope of a comfortable subsistence. If, therefore, we would enjoy those advantages which flow from religion, we must give proper encouragement to its ministers; and support them in such a manner that the prospect of extreme indigence may not deter them from entering into the sacred office. And if our citizens had a proper sense of the importance of religion, even in a political view, they would think it no great hardship to contribute their part for this purpose.

(To be concluded in our next.)

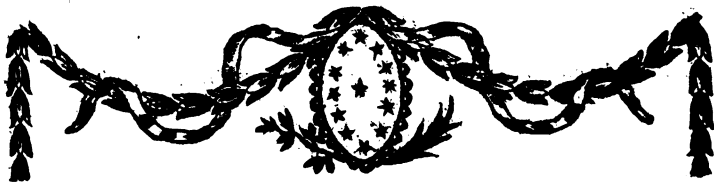
THE FOLLY OF AFFECTATION.

By the rev. mr. Joseph Lathrop, of Springfield, Massachusetts.

NOTHING conduces more to render a person agreeable, than easy and graceful manners. That our manners may be graceful, they must be natural; for actions, that are forced, are stiff and awkward, and therefore disgusting. The use of education is, not to transform, but to polish nature, and to eradicate accidental ill habits. The same gestures in behaviour, and the same tone of voice in speaking, that might be agreeable enough in one person, would offend in another; because, being differently formed, they must, while they follow nature, speak and act differently. Affectation is an attempt to be, or appear to be something different from our selves, and to assume graces, in our behaviour and conversation, of which we are not capable. It is the same thing in manners, as hypocrisy in religion. It is a folly chiefly incident to youth; it generally wears off, by age and acquaintance with mankind. It is always disgusting, not only as it is unnatural, but especially as it indicates a trifling vanity of mind. It usually takes its rise from a fondness to imitate some person, that is admired for superior accomplishments. It is commonly blind and undiscerning, and adopts the infirmities and peculiarities of the person admired, as readily, as his beauties and graces.

Currius is a gentleman of rank and fortune. His form is comely, his aspect engaging, and his natural good sense and lively genius are much improved, by a polite education, and an extensive knowledge of the world. He can be agreeable in all companies, without descending to the vices or follies of any.

In conversation, he is always entertaining and instructive, never assuming or loquacious. He can be humorous, without departing from innocence; and witty, without ridiculing religion, or aspersing characters. He never mortifies any in his company, by seeming indifferent to what they say, nor offends them by direct contradiction; he rather insinuates, than imposes his sentiments. His language is pure and accurate, but not laboured; his temper is calm, but not unfeeling; his behaviour is respectful, but not fawning. Stolidus is a youth of family and fortune; but his genius, taste and education rise not above mediocrity. He is little acquainted with books, less with men; his form is clumsy, and his manners stiff; yet he is intolerably vain; and ambitious of nothing so much, as to be thought a polite gentleman. Currius is the admiration of all his acquaintances; and for this reason Stolidus admires him too, and employs all his attention to speak and act like him. When he walks, he strains every muscle, to imitate Currius's natural and easy gait. He cocks his hat in the same manner, and elevates it the same number of degrees. He could smile or laugh decently enough, if he would be content to do it naturally; but affectation has changed his laugh into neighing, and his smiles into grinning. He slanders his clothes a dozen times in an evening, by his fruitless efforts to spit like Currius; and exhausts the glands of his mouth, by continual excretions, because Currius has a habit of spitting frequently. When he talks, he usually makes bad grammar, and



T H E
A M E R I C A N M U S E U M,
OR, UNIVERSAL MAGAZINE,

For J U N E, 1791.

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of an honest man."—"Forbear to accuse him. If he have done thus, it was because he was compelled to do so. I rely on his virtues—not on appearances."

"I could not but look on him with surprise and respect. "Do you wonder to find common sense in a negro?" said he. "Perhaps so; here you are surrounded by negroes, and no people know them less than you do. They tell me, notwithstanding, that you decide boldly on the character of negro nations. You must be infatuated: who ever thought of judging of a man who is free by a slave?"

"You see, my dear Itanoko, here was a noble display of innocence, frankness, and simplicity. The number of my visits to this youth served to confirm my esteem for him. I saw his judge. He appeared to be informed of the truth. I plainly represented to him, that this man had committed no crime; and that in condemning him, he would condemn innocence. "What would you have me do?" said he. "I am pressed by the law: all I can do is to delay the proceedings. Meanwhile, see his adversary. Let him desist from the prosecution; and I will be eager to restore this unfortunate youth to liberty." "Who is the prosecutor?" said I. "A young man of vitiated manners, answered the judge; "but of an esteemed family. It is Theodore de C——."

"You will feel how the name afflicted me. My respect for Honoria, for her venerable father, increased my zeal to spare their family the shame of a crime with which Theodore would stain it. I visited him; saw him often; pressed him; but in vain. He was deaf to reason, humanity, and religion.

"These obstacles gave further energy to my resolution. I determined to inform Honoria and her father of the act of violence, which Theodore had committed, at the hazard of all the uneasiness which it might cause them; every consideration sinking, in my judgment, before the superior obligation of preventing a deed of injustice. I was about to execute this resolve, when chance presented to me another mode which seemed to be infallible."

(To be continued.)

Essay on the influence of religion in civil society. By the rev. Thos. Reese, A. M. pastor of the presbyterian church at Salem, in South Carolina.—Written anno 1785.—Concluded from page 270.

THE SIXTEENTH AND LAST NUMBER.

WHAT others think of it, I know not: but to me it appears clearer than the sun, that we can never be a great, happy, or respectable people, while religion is generally despised and neglected among us. A general corruption of morals, will always be the consequence of a general contempt of religion. The more irreligious a people are, the more vicious; and the more vicious, generally speaking, the more miserable. However slowly vice may operate, in the end it brings sure and inevitable perdition on the body politic. I hear some of my countrymen bewailing our political factions and civil dissensions; others lamenting the precarious state of our trade, the scarcity of money, and the weight of our taxes: but, I confess, none of all these appears to me half so alarming as our rapid progress in vice. Faction, tumult, and intestine commotions, may be compared to certain acute and violent diseases, which, for a short time, cruelly ravage the human frame; yet, where the constitution is good, a crisis is frequently made, the disorder thrown off; and the body restored to its pristine health and vigour: but vice, like a deadly poison, sometimes slow, but always sure in its operation, infects every member of the political body, corrupts the whole mass, and issues in certain destruction. Many, who wish well to their country, are greatly alarm-

ed with the dread of an aristocracy, and seem to think, that nothing is so much to be feared, as the undue influence of a few wealthy and aspiring gentlemen, who, as they imagine, are eager to engross all the power into their own hands. I will not affirm that we are in no danger from this quarter. Some of our governments naturally tend to aristocracy: and we cannot be too careful to guard against the encroachments of power, and watch over those privileges which we have so dearly purchased. But trust me, my dear countrymen, it is not a matter of much moment to a people sunk in vice, what their form of government is. None can make them happy. There is a certain point of moral corruption, to which if we once arrive, we can no longer exist as a republic. A revolution must then of consequence take place, and some other kind of government, better suited to our circumstances, and the spirit of the people, must be adopted. There is a degree of vice, which utterly debases human nature, and renders men incapable either to think, or judge, or act for themselves. When they come to this, they are prepared for slavery, and it is necessary, perhaps best for them, to have a master. The history of the most noted republics shows how vain must be all the efforts of a few virtuous men, to support a falling constitution and preserve the liberties of a nation, when once that virtue, which is the basis of freedom, and the very soul of a democracy, is no more. When Cæsar passed the Rubicon, he saw that Rome must have a master—and why not Cæsar, as well as another? The virtuous and gallant spirit of Brutus could not brook this master. He thought, that, by sacrificing the tyrant, he could abolish the tyranny, and restore the republic—but he found himself mistaken. The sacrifice was not acceptable to the people. The Roman spirit was departed; and instead of resuming their liberty, they ungratefully rose up against their deliverers. A second triumvirate was formed, worse than the first; and the lords of the world slavishly surrendered their liberties into the hands of a boy. We are surpris'd at this; but it was perhaps the best thing they could do, as circumstances then stood.

There is, therefore, no other way to preserve our liberty, but by preserving our virtue.

Whatever secondary props may rise,
From politics, to build the public peace,
The basis is the manners of the land.

When rotten these, the politician's wiles
But struggle with destruction; as a child
With giants huge; or giants with a Jovè.

YOUNG.

Suffer me then, my dear countrymen, to address you with all seriousness on this subject. After having displayed so much virtue and valour, in the course of a most arduous and trying struggle—and at last, through the signal interposition of heaven, brought our affairs to such a happy issue—what a reproach will it be to us, if, by suffering ourselves to be effeminated with luxury, and plunged in vice, we tarnish all that glory, which we have acquired, and lose the fruits of so much blood and treasure! Would you preserve those liberties, which have been bought with the blood of thousands of your brave countrymen?—Be virtuous.—Would you rise to that summit of glory and felicity, which was the end of your separation from Great Britain?—Promote religion; and endeavour to stem that torrent of vice, which threatens to break in upon us, and to blast all those sanguine hopes, which animated us to do and suffer so much in the cause of freedom. Let the rich and the great use their influence to encourage purity of morals, and inspire their fellow-citizens with those sentiments of religion and virtue, which are so absolutely necessary to our political welfare. How happy would it be for us, if such would consider, how much it is in their power, to suppress vice, and promote the cause of virtue! Were I permitted to address them with freedom, it would be in the following strain.

Gentlemen,

You owe an immense debt to your country. Providence has placed you in an exalted station. Your wealth and rank make you respectable; your gentle and commanding manners, give an irresistible force and charm to your example. In persons of your rank, virtue and religion appear in the most lovely and alluring forms. As you, of all men, have it most in your power to spread the infection of vice, and corrupt the manners of the multitude: so none can more effectually recommend piety and virtue, or more successfully refrain the licentious and profligate. Only set the example—we are ready to follow you. You are no strangers to the influence of a court on the morals of a kingdom. What courts are in monarchies, you are in a republic: you give the tone and tincture to our manners; and if you be dissolute in your morals, and profligate in your lives, the infection will in time spread through all inferior ranks, and corrupt the whole mass of the people.

Do you profess yourselves lovers of your country?—Do you desire its prosperity?—Do you wish to see the laws respected and good order preserved?—And are you convinced that purity of morals, and consequently religion, is necessary for that purpose?—Lead the way then; show us a pattern, that we may dare to imitate; and use that influence and authority which heaven has put into your hands, so that you may be “a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to those that do well.” This is the only road to true honour and renown; this is the most effectual way to advance the glory of your country, to make your names respectable while you live, and your memory dear to posterity.

But I wish not to confine this address to those only of high rank and figure; permit me, therefore, my dear countrymen, to call upon you all, of whatever rank, character, or station, to lend your aid; and by your example and influence, to do your utmost, for the suppression of vice and the encouragement of virtue. There is none of you in a station so low, or circumstances so obscure, as to put it wholly out of your power to contribute, in some degree, for this purpose. The longer I consider the subject, the more fully I am convinced of the fatal effects of vice, and the absolute necessity of piety and purity of morals, in order to make us a great and happy people: and there is no other way in which you can more effectually promote the prosperity of your country, than by the practice of these. Do you love your country?—Do you desire to discharge the debt you owe to society?—Do you wish to be happy here, and enjoy eternal felicity hereafter?—Show your respect for that religion you profess; and endeavour to conform your lives to the precepts of christianity. “True religion always enlarges the heart, and strengthens the social tie.” If you be good christians, you can never fail of being good citizens.

The God of heaven hath favoured us with many singular blessings. He has given us many advantages, which no other people on the face of the earth have ever enjoyed; and if we improve these advantages in a proper manner, we may soon be the wonder and envy of the world. But if we forget the kind hand which covered us in the hour of danger, and conducted us through a sea of troubles, to the calm haven of peace and security—if we abuse the gifts of providence—turn our liberty to licentiousness—and provoke the vengeance of heaven by our daring impiety, and shocking immoralities—what can we expect, but that a righteous God will give us up to the fatal consequences of our own vices, and inflict upon us that punishment which we justly deserve? Hath he so visibly and remarkably interposed in our behalf—wrought so many deliverances for us—and poured out so many blessings upon us?—and shall we, by our ingratitude and abuse of his distinguishing mercies, provoke him to withdraw them from us, and hold us up to the world, as a monument of what an

impious and ungrateful people may expect from his hand? Forbid it, my countrymen! Forbid it, gratitude!—Forbid it, heaven!

THE reader has now my ideas on the subject. They are submitted to the candour of my countrymen.

If it should be thought, that, in some places, the dark side of things is exposed, I can honestly say, that, in this, my design was good. To awaken my fellow-citizens to a sense of their danger, and thus excite them more carefully to guard against it, was my motive; and, I hope, will be my excuse. Born in America, the author yields to none, in attachment to his country, of which he can say, perhaps with greater sincerity, than father Paul of Venice, *esto perpetua*. He has been the companion of his countrymen in tribulation, has shared in the dangers, and severely felt the effects of a distressing war; and counts it his glory and happiness, to have contributed his part towards bringing forward a revolution unequalled in the annals of the world. Content in obscurity, and unambitious of wealth or fame—if ever he had a sincere wish, or breathed an ardent prayer, it is, that this revolution may be productive of those happy consequences to which it has opened so fair a prospect, not only to Americans, but the whole human race. This he is fully persuaded, never will, never can be the case, unless piety and virtue be respected and practised. And if the candid and judicious shall only pronounce this, a well-meant, though they should think it a weak attempt to promote these, and, by consequence, the happiness of his country—he will rest satisfied, and submit to their decision, with silence and respect.

THOUGHTS ON DIVERSIONS.

By the rev. Joseph Lathrop, of Springfield, Massachusetts.

Nimirum sapere est abjectis utile nugis;
Et tempestivum pueris concedere ludum.

TO condemn diversions in the gross, is to contradict nature; to give them an unlimited licence, is to confront reason. The human mind is too large, to be satisfied with mere trifles; but too weak to bear continual exertion. It needs seasons of relaxation, as well as the body.

The love of novelty and variety is a natural and a useful passion. As one unvaried posture, or the same course of labour, soon fatigues the body; so one steady train of thought, an unremitting attention to, and pursuit of the same object, soon tires the mind. As the body seeks rest, by changing its posture or manner of exercise, so the mind seeks refreshment, by suspending its attention, or varying its subject. The love of variety answers valuable purposes; it is a stimulus of invention, a spring of enterprise, a principle, that leads to many important discoveries. If we were always content in the same beaten track, we never should strike out new paths.

Diversions, well chosen, not only afford present refreshment to body and mind, but contribute to the health and vigour of both, and consequently increase our happiness and usefulness.

As we are naturally fond of society, social diversions will usually have the preference to any that we can find in solitude. Our little amusements are heightened, by sharing them with our friends. There is a sort of natural benevolence, which interests us in the pleasures, as well as the pains of those around us. To think over a humorous adventure or diverting incident, gives not half so great pleasure, as to relate it in the circle of our companions. When we have read a book or poem so often, that it grows dull to us, we can read it to a companion of our taste and sentiments, with all the pleasure, which we conceived at