

A sermon preached in the chapel of the Magdalen Hospital ... on ... April 23, 1807 / [Thomas Lewis O'Beirne].

Contributors

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A
S E R M O N
PREACHED
IN
THE CHAPEL
OF THE
MAGDALEN HOSPITAL.

S. E. R. M. O. N.

PREACHED

IN THE CHAPEL

OF THE

MAGDALEN HOSPITAL

1856

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED
IN
THE CHAPEL
OF THE
MAGDALEN HOSPITAL,
BEFORE THE
PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS, & GOVERNORS
OF
THAT CHARITY,
AT THEIR ANNIVERSARY MEETING,
ON THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1807.

BY
THOMAS LEWIS O'BEIRNE, D. D.
LORD BISHOP OF MEATH.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD,
BOOKSELLER TO HER MAJESTY, OPPOSITE ALBANY,
PICCADILLY.

1807.

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S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

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T H E C H A P E L

O F T H E

M A G D A L E N H O S P I T A L

A N D

P R E S I D E N T V I C E P R E S I D E N T S & G O V E R N O R S

O F

T H A T C H A R I T Y

A T T H E I R A N N U A L M E E T I N G

O N T H U R S D A Y , A P R I L 23, 1807.

BY

T H O M A S J E W S O ' B I R N E , D . D .

L O R D B I S H O P O F M E D I A

L O N D O N :

P R I N T E D F O R J . H A T C H A R D ,

S T R E E T S E N D S T R E E T , C O U R T S Y D N E Y

1807

J. BRETTELL, Printer,
Marshall-Street, Golden-Square.

TO

JAMES ALLAN PARK, Esq.

ONE OF

HIS MAJESTY'S COUNSEL,

AND

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR THE COUNTY PALATINE
OF DURHAM.**

DEAR SIR,

IF the following Sermon, either from the Pulpit or the Press, shall have served the cause of Religion and Morals, it must be attributed to a compliance with your wishes. At your desire, I preached it; I publish it in deference to your opinion, and I feel a pleasure in inscribing it to you.

In

In an age, when to every thinking mind it must be matter of serious alarm to witness so general a degeneracy from the spirit and temper of the earlier days of our Reformed Church, it must be peculiarly consoling to have living Examples to remind us of the distinguished legal characters of those days, who, to the highest professional Reputation, added the still higher praise of genuine piety, unaffected devotion, and extensive Christian knowledge.

From the countenance and co-operation of such characters, refuting the senseless position that Religion is the business of the Clergy alone, the study of none but the weak, the ignorant, and the deluded, the Teachers of the Gospel must derive singular advantage in their ministerial labours: Nor can we but congratulate with every friend of Christianity, when, in support of our claims on the Laity to join with

us in stemming the torrent of irreligion that is breaking in upon us, we have to plead the instance of one of the most eminent and learned of the profession of the Law edifying the public by such productions as, the “ Earnest Exhortation to a frequent Reception of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper,” and amidst all the toils and fatigues of the bar, that always increase with increasing celebrity, taking an active part in the promotion of every charitable Institution that provides a Christian Education for the Children of the Poor, that reclaims them from vice, or withdraws them from its early contagion, and that opens an asylum to the repenting sinner.

I trust that there is something more laudable than vanity in my wishing to have it known that I enjoy the good opinion of such a Man, and in thus publicly
professing

professing the high Respect and Esteem
with which I am,

DEAR SIR,

Your sincere Friend,

And faithful humble Servant,

T. L. MEATH.

A

SERMON,

Æc.

BRING THEM UP IN THE NURTURE AND
ADMONITION OF THE LORD.

EPH. VI. 4.

I HAVE undertaken, my brethren, to employ my ministry this day in exhorting you to close the public service with one of the most acceptable sacrifices you can offer to that God, whose wrath you have been deprecating, and whose blessings you have implored. I have undertaken to recommend to the bounty of Christians, an Institution that could have originated only in the spirit of Christianity;—an Institution, the design of which never could have been suggested by the dissolute and licentious Epicurean, the stern Stoic, or the rigid and unrelenting Scribe of the Jewish law;—an Institution peculiar to the gracious dispensation re-

vealed from Heaven by HIM who came from thence to *seek that which was lost, to heal the broken-hearted, to set at liberty them that were bruised;* and who, to wretched man, sinking under the sense of his guilt, and the dread of the punishment that awaited him, but ignorant if he could obtain a ransom for his soul, or where to seek for it, opened a view into the mansions of the blessed, and shewed him the *Heavenly Host rejoicing in the presence of GOD over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-and-nine just persons who had never sinned.*

You all know the history of this Institution. An object of censure and reproach to those who know not of what spirit the professors of Christianity ought to be; exciting the sneer of the licentious, and the ridicule of the profligate, it was planned by the purest minds of which our Society could boast in their day. It found immediate encouragement and support among many distinguished personages, who were most eminent for that Christian virtue which the objects of their commiseration had most flagrantly and fatally violated. In its progress to our times, it has been countenanced and upholden by a constant succession of the same distinguished description; until, with its present established character, and after having, by so long an experience of its salutary effects, removed every prejudice, and refuted every calumny, we
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see it sheltered under the immediate protection of that August Personage who has added dignity even to a throne, by the most exemplary display of those virtues that are chiefly ornamental and attractive in her sex.

How grateful must it be to the Minister of GOD, placed as I now am, not only to have this retrospect to take, but to view this congregation, and still to see the same virtues, influenced and directed by the same spirit. How great must be his satisfaction to behold so many of our highest classes aspiring through this Charity to the rank and distinction of the genuine Disciples of the Friend of sinners; and setting to a Christian people, so illustrious an example of that mercy which the gracious BEING, whom, by the indulgence of some favoured passion, we all offend, commands us to shew to others, if we hope, ourselves, to receive it at His hands.

Encouraged by this appearance, and knowing how you have come prepared, and *the mind that is in you*, and that it is to the Grace of GOD, acting upon your own feelings and dispositions, and not to any efforts of mine, that I must trust for the display of your bounty, I should think I trifled with your time, if I confined myself to those motives, and exhortations to beneficence, which might seem to be the most appropriate subject for such an anniversary.

Suffer me rather to endeavour to engraft upon this appeal to your charity a point of general
instruction,

instruction, which a moment's reflection on the principal cause of the disorders that render such an Institution necessary, will naturally connect with it. So may I hope, with GOD's assistance, to share more largely in the meritorious work of this day, while I submit to you some reflections that may extend their influence beyond the present occasion, and excite those who hear me, and particularly the female part of this audience, to prevent, within the circle of their own duties, the baneful effects of that neglected or erroneous education, to which these poor objects of your pity have fallen victims.

In discoursing, with this view, on Education, I shall have to enforce a duty, which, in the present instructed state of society, and in that fullness of light which JESUS CHRIST hath diffused around us, parents of every state and condition must necessarily class among the primary obligations of Nature and Religion. But I fear that, however justly this may be assumed in the abstract, or speculatively acknowledged, we shall find, upon looking into the practice and experience of life, that the different obligations that arise from the different points of view in which we consider the interests of our children, are discharged with very different degrees of zeal, and that those which claim the principal place, are but too universally postponed to all the rest.

It is not that, as a minister of the Gospel, I
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should be forward to accuse any of my brethren in CHRIST, of want of natural affection for their children; or that they do not wish, that they would not labour to promote their happiness to the utmost extent of what GOD and nature would require of them. Who is the *woman who could forget her child, that she should have compassion on the son of her womb?* or what *father* can be so unnatural as not to pity his own child?

But it is in the *selection* of the objects of parental solicitude that the error lies. To neglect to provide for the immediate wants of their children; to leave them in the helpless state in which they come into life, weak in body, and feeble in mind; to be slothful or remiss in looking forward to their progress in the world, and preparing them for securing their own establishment, and laying the foundation of their future fortunes: this is the crime of but a few; a few who are disowned by nature, and holden in abhorrence by the rest of mankind. But to rear and build up the spiritual man; to protect and rescue him from the fatal effects of that corruption of nature, which we have entailed on our children with their very being; to train the disciple of CHRIST in the way he should walk; to form and fashion him to piety and religion, and to such virtuous habits and dispositions as are requisite to make provision for his eternal state; alas! what place

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is, generally, assigned to these important cares amidst all the suggestions and pursuits of parental solicitude; and with what remissness, indifference, and negligence are they attended to, even by those who are supposed to be most deeply impressed with a sense of parental duty?

The error, then, as I have said, and a fatal error it is both to the individual and to society, lies in this; we do not consider in *what* the real happiness of our children consists; we either mistake, or overlook, *the things that make for their salvation*. Is there a thinking parent who can rest satisfied under an apprehension that he may have fallen into this error? What so sacred obligation can lie upon us, as seriously to enquire how we are to avoid or to correct it?

In instituting such an enquiry, there are two leading points that present themselves to our consideration; *Instruction* and *Example*.

We will first consider it under the head of **INSTRUCTION**.

Besides that instinctive principle that teaches and impels all living creatures to provide for the bodily wants of their offspring, there is, in the breast of every Christian, another monitor that opens a wider scene of action to parental solicitude; that imposes more important duties, impels by higher motives, and points to more exalted and sublime ends. That monitor is Religion. This discovers to the parents the whole nature of that being

being whom they have been instrumental in bringing into existence. In the inheritor of their own *mortality*, it shews them the heir of *eternal life*; and in the destined victim of *disease* and *death*, that wails and laments before them, as if anticipating our mortal lot, it teaches them to contemplate the child of GOD, endowed with an *immortal soul*, and the redeemed of CHRIST, destined for *eternal happiness*.

To place the subject in this point of view is, in itself, to prove that the duties connected with it are paramount to every other obligation of nature; and the only question that remains is, how we are to discharge those duties. Having to form a rational creature for two different stages of existence, by what course of instruction, are we to prepare him for that stage for which he is finally and permanently destined?

The most superficial observer, who contemplates the infant man on his first coming into life, must perceive that he is as weak in his mind and intellects, as he is feeble in his frame and bodily organs. But, as the powers of the body gradually advance and acquire strength and activity, so do the faculties of the mind gradually unfold and expand themselves. It soon discovers an active principle that is incessantly at work; ranging instinctively from object to object, and demonstrating that it must be employed in some way or other. It early feels a thirst for discovery
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and knowledge, that must be satisfied. The first duty, therefore, which children claim of their parents is to attend to these early workings of the soul; these early aspirations after their immortal state. It is to give a proper direction to this active principle, and to gratify this thirst with what the Scriptures call living waters; with pure and unadulterated streams drawn from the sources of Eternal Truth.

In order to this, they should begin by degrees to inform and carefully instruct their young charge in the whole compass of their duty to GOD, their neighbour, and themselves. This, GOD expressly prescribes in various parts of the Scriptures to the people of Israel, in speaking of the Laws He had given them. *Set your hearts,* says He, *unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do. Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,* says He in another place, *and shalt talk of them as thou sittest down in thy house, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

At how early a season this important work is to be begun; He, also, particularly marks out to us. It is on the first dawn of Reason; when the young and tender bud of the understanding begins to form itself, and the first spring of thought invites the assistance of cultivation. *Whom shall he make to understand doctrine?*

Them

Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast. To them, continues the Prophet, *precept should be after precept, line upon line; here a little, and there a little;* early and watchful attentions, persevering care, unwearied assiduities.

Such are the instructions of the gracious AUTHOR of our being, speaking by his holy Prophets, and Teachers. Such are the precepts of HIM, who, as He made man, knows best what is in him;—knows best the seeds He planted in his heart, and by what culture and process they can be best expanded and matured.

But what a different lesson are we taught by that presumptuous spirit that has risen up in our days, to reverse the process of Reason and of Nature, and to new-mould the work of GOD? From how many modern schools has been propagated the doctrine, that Religious Instruction, the knowledge of GOD, or of His Laws should make no part of the early Education of youth? That, to come to the study of Religion, of its revelations, its mysteries, its duties, the understanding should be formed and the judgment matured? That no bias should be, previously, given to the mind to influence it in this investigation by any preconceived opinions, imposed upon us by the suggestions of others, before we are capable of ourselves to judge of their truth or their falsehood; and that it is

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only in this advanced stage, this unprejudiced, unoccupied state of the human intellect, that it can be open to any proper ideas of the SUPREME BEING, His existence, His nature, His Attributes, the relation in which we stand to Him, and what they would call the whole *science* of Religion?

But I might appeal to the happy experience of many parents who hear me, against the fallacy of these opinions. Many parents, I am persuaded, who hear me, can tell us how delightful, as well as how easy, has been the task of bringing young children to CHRIST, as HE Himself commanded; Of training the infant mind to the knowledge of GOD, and of all that in his Holy Writ, He has revealed to us, as necessary to Salvation. They have found that the *science* of Religion, that I may, for a moment, adopt the language of these philosophers, may be learned, like every other science, by early and habitual application, proportioned to the gradual expansion of the faculties of the soul: That it has its rudiments, which by being simplified, and classed on a progressive scale, lead the young mind, *line after line*, through a continued series of instruction, to the most extended and comprehensive knowledge of the sublime subject: That, in this progress, the first principles may be impressed upon the memory, not, certainly, with any thing approaching to

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an adequate notion of their *full* import, for in what science can this be done at so early a stage? but, that being once deposited there, they are as seed committed to a proper soil, and must, in due course of time, repay all the labour of cultivation in a full harvest of fruit unto Salvation.

Points of abstract speculation, metaphysical distinctions, and disquisitions, the disputes of the schools, and the subtilities of that *wisdom* of the Greeks, which, in an unhappy hour, insinuated itself into the church, to mix with the *foolishness* of the Gospel, with the plainness and simplicity of the system revealed by CHRIST, its own refined speculations, these are, indeed, misplaced and mistimed subjects;—food too strong for young and tender minds. But, although they cannot be fed with *meat*, (to use the Apostle's metaphor,) may they not, as babes in CHRIST, be fed with the *milk* of the Gospel? May they not receive the nourishment of divine instruction under such a form as is suited to their years, and as may be strengthened as they advance in their intellectual strength?

Our holy Religion is not a dry system of ethics, a collection of aphorisms and maxims forming a mere system of conduct, or the science of life. Its Divine AUTHOR tells us, that its seat is in the heart; that its spirit must live in the heart, and mix with all its affections. May it not, therefore, be effectually employed in influencing,

and giving its direction to, every sentiment and feeling of the human breast from the first smile, that shews that the child has learned to distinguish and know his earthly parent, to that fullness of joy that shall possess him, when he shall be admitted into the presence of his Heavenly FATHER; when he shall see HIM face to face, and know Him, as he is himself known?

Do we not see children, from their earliest moments, connect the ideas of pleasure and dissatisfaction, enjoyment and discontent, with the appearance of every person that approaches them, according to the impressions of kindness or severity, attention or disregard, which the treatment they receive from them makes on their minds? And can it be maintained that these suggestions of nature may not be directed towards their GOD and their REDEEMER? Towards their first and best Benefactor; the Maker of every thing they see around them; the Author of every comfort and blessing they enjoy? Can it be maintained, that such an association may not become as familiar, and rise as spontaneously on every appropriate occasion, as that which connects every impression made on their senses with the feelings and affections of their heart?

But, in truth, I am enforcing a point that is self-evident, and that carries with it its own conviction. The principles on which it rests are admitted and recommended to be acted upon
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by these very system-makers, in all their writings as well as on theoretical as practical education. They are the principles on which they reason in all those works, in which they affect to teach Benevolence, Philanthropy, Sympathy, Sensibility, the main springs, in this antichristian school, of all human conduct; the only efficacious motives and incitements to virtue in that system of education which it was reserved for these days to discover, and which we are called upon to substitute to all that has been hitherto taught under the system established in the early days of the Reformation, while the revived spirit of the Gospel was yet in its vigour, and which has been persevered in to our day—A system which having for its object to mould the public mind on the pure and genuine doctrines of the Gospel, and the morals and manners that flow from them, has formed that great people, who, through all their gradations, have been strengthened into that pith and solidity of character, that has remained unshaken amidst the convulsions of all the nations around them: That has riveted them with such inviolable attachment to the maxims and institutions of their ancestors, and bonded them together so indissolubly on a common principle of love to their GOD, their King, and their Laws, as that they have not only secured themselves against all that could destroy, or endanger their own internal
peace,

peace, from the few who were infected by the innovating spirit of the age, but raised the only barrier that Europe could oppose to the most domineering tyranny that ever oppressed its states.

But let us leave these metaphysical experimentalists, who would fabricate for us a philosophical GOD, and a philosophical people, instead of the GOD of the Scriptures, and a people formed on the maxims and by the spirit of the Gospel, to reap the fruits of their own perverted ingenuity, and to share them with those who may be prepared by their indifference to all religion, to adopt their speculations. In the result of such experiments among other nations, and in the almost natural attachment of all ranks of our people to the faith of their fathers, we have a sure ground of reliance that they will find but few proselytes to their opinions; few to join with them in separating the national education from the national religion,* or to explode a system, emanating from that religion, as a vestige

* It is evident that these observations are only directed against innovations in the system of moral and religious education, and the substitution of philosophical principles to the principles of the Gospel, in forming the morals of the poor. They cannot affect the ingenious inventor of the new method of teaching the lower orders to read and write, the Rev. Dr. BELL, nor any, who, adopting his method, retain his principles, and, as he well expresses it, ingraft his system into the bosom of the Church and State.

of bigotry, unworthy of this enlightened age.* Let us, then, recall our thoughts to the precepts of Holy Writ, the only rule of our conduct, and let us apply them to the practice of the times in which we live. Let us look into society, such as we find it in our own circles, or in those with which we are any way connected, and what shall be our discoveries respecting this important point?—From the general description of this audience, all reflections must be superfluous, but such as apply to the upper ranks of life; to those whose circumstances leave them no other solicitude for their children, than to transmit and proportion among them either the inheritance of their ancestors, or the acquirements of their own successful industry. Among these classes there is now scarcely any difference on the subject I am treating. Departing from the wise and sober example of our ancestors, the sons and daughters of the country gentleman and the wealthy trader are, in our days, trained in the same course as the nobles and highest commoners of the land; and our modern system of education is, so far, like most other modern systems, that it is framed and calculated to level all distinctions and confound all ranks. —So far is this true, that it extends through all the gradations of these condi-

* See Mr. Whitbread's speech, on his introducing his Poor-Bill.

tions amongst us. Each treads so close on the other that there appears to be a general contest and emulation in tricking out the youth of both sexes as creatures designed for no higher aims, or more exalted objects, than are to be attained by external appearances, and what are called fashionable accomplishments, to the neglect of all the religion of JESUS CHRIST teaches as most essential to their present, and exclusively essential to their future happiness.

On these external appearances, and these fashionable accomplishments no expences are spared, no assiduities. The great object is to provide for what we deem the good things of this world. To give our sons those acquirements that shall fit them to appear with advantage on the public stage of life, to maintain their rank, or to raise themselves to wealth and consequence. It is to fashion and form our daughters for admiration, and to adorn them for advantageous pursuit.

If those to whom we intrust them from their earliest days, not as assistants but as substitutes, to whom we altogether transfer the duties which nature and nature's GOD have imposed upon ourselves, should snatch a few moments from the various occupations that are enjoined them, to give their pupils of either sex some idea of God or of Religion, 'tis well: but in how comparatively few instances does it form any part
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of the stipulation of the parent on purchasing their services?—And as for morals, who but priests or bigots, or the dupes of bigots and priests, would look for them to the dull and antiquated pages of the Scriptures, or to books written in their spirit and inculcating their maxims?—The morals of a *gentleman* are to be learned from such fashionable volumes as those in which simulation and dissimulation are recommended by parental authority. Where the father inculcates to his son lessons of seduction, systematically delivered and experimentally enforced; and where the disgrace of families, and the destruction of their peace in the infidelity of the wife, are adduced as the best proof he can give of an education becoming his condition, as his best recommendation to universal acceptance whenever he presents himself, and a security of success in all his pursuits.

Latterly, we have even seen exceeded what, not twenty years ago, was considered as a system deserving universal abhorrence and execration. The pupil of Chesterfield would be an object of love, compared with him who is left to be early initiated in the doctrines of our modern philosophers; and we should be almost reconciled to the polished vices of the one when placed in contrast with the vulgar, disgusting, shocking immoralities, and brutal licentiousness of the other.

For the daughters another school is opened—The School of Novels and Romance;—the School of Modern Female Morality.—In that school, to purify their principles and rectify their morals, the senses must be seduced, and the passions inflamed. There the great master in this art, the canonised philosopher of Geneva, leads his youthful pupil through all the blandishments of voluptuousness, all the violence of unrestrained desires, all the wild fancies of a heated imagination; and by every insidious attack on all the venerable prejudices and sacred institutions that have ever hitherto preserved the sanctity and purity of the union between the sexes, raises her to the sublime character of a female philosopher, and of that monster of Christian days, a female Deist.

In that school are taught the *Rights of Women*. There the emancipated sex are instructed to shake off all the shackles with which they have been hitherto clogged by tyrannical custom and usurping prejudices; to break into all the provinces that have been hitherto supposed to belong exclusively to the rougher sex; to cast away every restraint that has hitherto guarded the lips of the modest virgin and the chaste matron; to pry into those secrets of nature, the very mention of which has been hitherto considered as incompatible with female delicacy, and to indulge in as unrestrained a freedom of language, as in an unbounded freedom of thinking.*

* The Rights of Women; by Mrs. Wolstencroft.

In that school, all the art and magic of the stage, all the fascinating power of those transcendent talents, that give reality to fiction, and that so irresistibly dispose the young and warm heart to act what so forcibly awakens all its feelings, and to be what it beholds with such interest and delight, all are employed to undermine the principles in which the female character is formed to soften, polish, and improve life: They are employed to recommend to pity, to commiseration, to affection, to *respect*, the adulteress,—The adulteress who, to the foulest crime that can be committed against Religion or society, against the laws of GOD or Man, adds the blackest ingratitude, and dishonours the bed of her benefactor and husband; while, by a refinement in the science of depraving the heart and debasing the principles, it is left in doubt, in the play to which you all know I allude,* whether that husband is to be an object of hatred, and branded with the imputation of brutality for not going the full length of the feelings which the poet has awakened in his audience, or whether he conforms himself to their sentiments; de-

* The Stranger.—Hopes have been entertained that the taste for these German Plays was one of those novelties, that soon wear themselves out, and that our stage would not be long disgraced by them: But the Stranger, palliating adultery, and Pizarro, debasing the Christian Religion below all others, are still among our stock plays, and continue to be exhibited with the whole strength of the Theatre.

scends to what even the maxims of the world so universally, and as it were instinctively, condemn as shocking and degrading; reconciles himself to his own shame; takes pollution to his arms; and commits the children of his love to the care and direction of that unnatural mother who forgot all she owed them, and involved them in her own disgrace and infamy!

O unhappy parent, who exposeth thy beloved child, the hope and pride of thy house, to such seductions, and strange and almost impossible to think, the very best thus expose their daughters! canst thou expect that she shall escape contagion? canst thou expect that, with her imagination thus tainted and her mind thus debauched; without a single antidote, without a single principle of religion or pure morality to support and preserve her, she shall resist the thousand temptations that may assail her in her intercourse through life? Canst thou hope or flatter thyself that she shall carry into the house of an husband that innocent and spotless mind, those chastened affections, pure charities, and matron virtues, that blessed the union of those who have been educated in other days, and with other principles?—As well mayest thou believe all the wild fancies of her own seducing romances, or give credit to the miraculous legend that tells thee of the female probationer, who walked blindfold through burning ploughshares unsinged and unhurt.

THUS

THUS far I have considered our subject under the head of *Instruction*. I shall now proceed to consider it under the head of *EXAMPLE*.—Example, without which, Instruction avails but little, and must evidently fail of all force and efficacy.

“ I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way,” says the royal Psalmist:—“ I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.”—The wisdom and the necessity of such a scrupulous exemplary conduct from parents under the domestic roof, must be obvious.—Precept and admonition are momentary in their impressions. Like the electric fire, that strikes,—but, “ as it strikes, expires,” the effect of them ceases but too generally, with the sounds that convey them. But it is not so with example; Example seizes on all the senses at once: It works in them by an uniform and steady process: It gains upon the soul by an imperceptible but certain influence, and gradually moulds the tender dispositions of youth to whatever habits we wish them to assume, as the hand of the artist slowly gives to the marble whatever form he proposes to himself.

Good and sound precepts, as has been observed by a great and good man, may be said to point out the objects of laudable pursuits at a distance, and to trace out the course that leads to them, by bounds and landmarks that may speedily be effaced, or be easily mistaken or overlooked.

looked. But, my brethren, good example in a parent, like Tobit's angel, appears before us, as some gracious messenger, sent in person from heaven under the most engaging and endearing form. Like that celestial guide, it takes, as it were, the inexperienced youth by the hand, conducts and guides him through all the difficulties and dangers he has to encounter in his journey to manhood, and at length sets him down in the place of his abode, gifted with every thing that can make him a comfort to his parents, to himself, and to the society in which he lives.

How careful, therefore, how scrupulous should all parents be how they *walk in their house*,—how they conduct themselves in the presence, and under the observation of their children, and what examples they set before them? For, suppose the example to be bad, and how vain must prove all that can be said to them of precept and admonition! They may apply to their parents, as I will apply to them, the reasoning of the Apostle: "*Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*" You are a father, and you admonish your sons to love and fear GOD? But when do they see you bend your own knee in prayer to GOD? Amidst all the occupations to which they see you devote all your time, and all your attention, what hour do you set apart with them for Christian improvement? In what manner do they see you observe the Sabbath, or attend to the public service, and the other ordinances

nances of the religion in which you profess to bring them up? When you tell them they must not swear, do you profane the name of God, in their hearing, by ceaseless repetitions of oaths and imprecations? When you exhort them to adhere inviolably to truth, to honour, and to equity, do they detect you in daily falsehoods, and in repeated acts of injustice, dishonesty, and dishonour? When you exhort them to sobriety, do you exhibit yourself to them enflamed with liquor? And when you inculcate domestic harmony and love to each other, do you fill the paternal roof with ceaseless altercation and contention, and give way to daily transports of passion and rage?

You are a mother, and you exhort your daughter to preserve her character spotless, and her reputation pure and unsullied; yet, in her presence, or under her observation, which you cannot elude, you encourage every advance from the frivolous and the volatile, the licentious and the profligate. You exhort her to cultivate the dispositions and the habits that will give her a taste for domestic enjoyments, and qualify her for matron duties; yet she sees you devote all your days to vain, trifling, and idle pursuits. Not content with running the weekly round of dissipation, and toiling from night to night in pursuit of pleasure and amusement, you lead her by the hand to witness and to be habituated to a contempt not only of God's ordinances, but of the laws, the
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customs, the habits, and the feelings of the country to which she belongs, and to exhibit herself at the Sunday concert, the Sunday gaming table, and all those other violations of the Sabbath, which it seems to be considered as a kind of distinction among so many females of high rank and station in this day, to display to an indignant public: And while you give her lessons of modesty, and of chasteness of appearance and deportment, you adopt, and teach her to adopt the fashions, and the dress of those women, whom the convulsions of a neighbouring nation have thrown up on the surface of their society from the very lowest sinks of their population, and placed in situations to force into general adoption the depraved taste of that refuse of the sex, who shamelessly expose, in order to make a traffic of, their persons.

With such contradictions between parental instruction, and parental example,—Hearing nothing taught but virtue, and seeing nothing practised but vice, what are we to expect for the rising generation? Which is likely to make the most lasting and effective impression, the precepts that lecture, or the examples that seduce? Or is it that we have no such examples to lament? Have I been amusing you with allusions to disorders that exist only in my own jaundiced imagination? Have I been drawing pictures of fancy, in colours of exaggeration? Alas! we your ministers, cannot shut our eyes
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to the scenes that are passing before us, even if we were disposed to sacrifice our duty to the fashion of the times, and silently to sail down the stream with the vain, the thoughtless, and the profligate, rather than face the imputation of being morose, and splenetic, and soured by bigotry and superstition for raising our voices against abuses, which even Philosophy, the boasted substitute for Religion, would think itself compelled to censure.

But while such deviations from the ancient manners, and our ancient religious habits, as have provoked these observations, call on the guardians of the public morals, and the teachers of religion to combine in a general effort to prevent their increase, or their continuance, it would be inexcusable not to acknowledge, with thankfulness to GOD, that they may be said to be in our moral, what the plague and pestilence are in our physical atmosphere. They are not indigenous. The native air we breathe engenders, of itself, not such noxious infections. Whenever they visit us, they are wafted to our shores from some foreign coast, some less salubrious clime. We have, therefore, reason to hope that the danger they threaten is but momentary. We have reason to hope that all who, with the priesthood and the state, *with Moses and with Aaron*, are yet on *the LORD's side*, will stand

between the dead and the living, to prevent the spreading of this plague; and that these alarming abuses will gradually give way to the national character, to the public feeling, that almost naturally revolts against them, and above all, to the uniform influence of the pure and reformed Religion we possess, and which, fortunately, is most cultivated and revered amongst us by the sex whose manners have so great an influence on every society, that is in the least polished.

I need not remind you what a contrast we have had, at all times, to offer in this character of our women, to those of that country from whence the tide of vicious manners has been at all times setting in upon our coast. But I cannot refrain from observing, that there is something, as it were, unnatural, certainly that there is every thing portentous and alarming in our adoption of the manners of such a people, even in a political point of view. There is not a nation upon earth, whose civil liberties so thoroughly harmonize with their Religion, as our own. So indissolubly has the connexion between them been cemented, in the gradual formation of our constitution, that to separate them, would be to destroy that most perfect of all human institutions. But the mere profession of the most pure Religion, without its vital, operating

ting spirit, is as the dead letter of those celebrated codes of law, under the influence and operation of which, nations, afterwards extinguished by their vices, enjoyed the most extensive fame, and rose to dominion and glory. The laws remained, in the midst of all their degeneracy, the boast of their primitive days, the reproach of the age that had extinguished their influence. And greater shall be our reproach, and similar our fate, whenever our manners shall have ceased to bear the stamp, and reflect the purity of our Religion.

Are we without examples of our own, to confirm the truth of these observations? At what period of our history, have our civil liberties been in the greatest danger? Was it not when the licentious and dissolute manners of the French court came in with the Restoration, and the close of Charles the Second's reign was marked by so confirmed a degeneracy from the grave, decorous and Religious temper of the earlier days of the Reformation, as invited the royal slave of Rome to corrupt our faith, that he might the more effectually destroy our freedom? Fertile as is this our age in paradoxes, what paradox can be greater than that we should have similar dangers to dread in the reign of one of the most virtuous, and religious monarchs that ever filled the throne of this realm?

HAVING now considered the heads which I proposed to you, and, if the subject were not my excuse, much trespassed on your time, I shall address a very few words to your understanding and your feelings.—If both your understanding, and your feelings must have gone along with me, and acknowledged the truth of the observations I suggested as I proceeded through this discourse, what can we say, first, of those parents, who, neither by instruction nor example, labour to preserve their children from evil, or to train them to good; or secondly, of those who, mistaking the things that are chiefly essential to their children's happiness, confine all their cares to their improvement in what the fashion and spirit of this world represent as essential? Those whom their consciences may arraign on either of these accounts, I most earnestly exhort, as they value their own, or their children's happiness, to enter, from this day, on a new course—I earnestly exhort them, as they value their own or their children's happiness, to implant, and to cultivate, in the hearts of those children, the knowledge, the fear, and the love of GOD—what He has commanded, and what forbidden. Either there is no truth in GOD's word, no reliance on the experience of all ages, or this is the *beginning of wisdom*, the source of all the real happiness, that they can know, and without which, however it may thrive with them

in other respects, they can never be said to be happy here, and they must be wretched for ever hereafter.

It is difficult to conceive how a parent who is once convinced of the truth of this representation, (and I cannot suppose that there are any parents here who are not so convinced,) should require any stronger motive to exert themselves in a matter that so essentially interests the children of their love; and yet there are other strong motives to suggest to them.

There are no parents who hear me, who do not know from their own experience, as well as from the discoveries of the Gospel, that their children are naturally inclined to evil, and that they have inherited from themselves a tendency and proneness to corruption, and degeneracy. They begot their children in their own image and likeness, and they transmitted to them vicious inclinations and evil desires, such as they have had to struggle with themselves during their journey through life. How earnest, therefore, should be their exertions to enable their children, in time, to correct those perverse dispositions and to subdue that spirit, that ever takes part with their corrupt and depraved natures, and *tempts them to evil continually!* It is not improbable but they may know, from their own experience, the fatal consequences of being early engaged in a course of dissipation
and

and sin, to their substance, their health, and their ease of mind. They may feel how useless and unavailing are all the stings of remorse, and the sharp chidings of conscience, to do away their effects, or to restore to them what they have forfeited by the folly and wickedness of their youth ! How earnestly therefore should they labour to put God, and goodness, in early possession of their children's hearts and affections, and to have them planted with good seeds, before vicious inclinations spring up, and grow into habit, custom, and strength !

The most punctual discharge of their duty in this case cannot possibly be in the least incompatible with the greatest anxiety and care to provide for their temporal establishment : on the contrary, a good and virtuous education is the very best inheritance you can transmit to your child : It may supply, and often has supplied, the place of inheritance, and, by giving its aid and its efficacy to honest industry, has proved to be more lasting and durable than riches, and to have *been the better part, which cannot be taken from them.*

Thus *providing* for them, it must be a most heart-felt consolation, to reflect that we are at the same time providing for our own comfort and happiness. " A wise son," says Solomon, " maketh a glad father." When the Scriptures would describe those men whom they con- sider

sider as the happiest of their kind, they place amongst the first, *him that hath joy of his children.* And indeed what greater satisfaction can we possibly conceive, than to see our sons, as they are running the course which we have passed, repaying all our cares by their virtuous deportment and exemplary life; objects at once of delight and pride; renewing as it were our youth, when we are decaying and withering away; and copying whatever in our own conduct has procured us most the esteem and love of Men, or that affords us the strongest hopes of the favour, and protection of GOD?

And you, ye mothers, what joy can thrill your hearts with such exquisite delight, as to behold your daughters growing up, not only sweet to sense and lovely to the eye, but walking blameless and irreproachable in the sight of heaven and of earth; not only fashioned to whatever can add to their native attractions, but adorned with all the inward graces, and provided with all the virtuous dispositions that will enable you to transplant them into another house, as earnest of that domestic happiness which you yourselves have diffused through your own, and as instruments, under GOD's hands, to transmit to other generations a succession of virtue and goodness like your own!

This is a joy that is to be tasted by the good mother in every rank and degree. Female
loveliness

loveliness and female virtue, the charms of innocence and the attractions of genuine modesty, in the female breast, are confined to no particular condition; they influence as irresistibly among the inmates of the cottage, as of the palace; and the daughter who is possessed of them is as much a crown of glory to the poor man, as the princess is to the monarch; and the daughter who is divested of them, is equally their bane and their curse.

Could we but appeal to the penitent inmates of this house;—would they but disclose to us the secret of their hearts, what proofs should we not find to confirm the truth of the observations that I have been suggesting to you in this discourse? What pangs and what remorse should we see them endure, while, on the one hand, we paint the feelings of the virtuous mother, rejoicing over her equally virtuous child; and, on the other, the anguish and the agony of her who weeps over her child's disgrace? Is it not probable that we should draw from the bitterness of their sorrow a stronger lesson to all parents who hear me than I can convey to them by any words of mine? Is it not probable that many of them have cause to reproach not so much themselves, as the wretched violators of the most sacred of all duties, who brought them into life, but neglected what alone could make life a blessing to them? Might they not tell us, that if they have
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fallen from their innocence, it was because they had been early abandoned to themselves without instruction, without advice, without reproof? That no tender Mother had watched over their early days to instil into their minds sentiments of Virtue and Religion; to cherish and strengthen as they grew up, the instinctive principles of female delicacy, and female honour; or to guard them against the arts of the seducer, who barbarously took advantage of their ignorance of all their duties, and of their idle habits, to rob them of their innocency, and then left them a prey to wretchedness, and to infamy?

Branded as they were in those days of their infatuation,—driven from all decent intercourse,—the stain of one sex, and the bane of the other, how much less culpable were they than those, who, with other advantages, have incurred the same guilt? Who, equally criminal, are screened from disgrace by the place they hold in society?—Whose example, instead of deterring by the infamy that should attach to their character, encourages imitation by the indulgence they experience? Who, countenanced and received by the world, often, strange to say, by the virtuous and respectable part of that world, think not of their crime before GOD?—Who live in guilt and die in impenitence; and probably extend their licentiousness to the next generation in the loose and disorderly conduct

of daughters depraved by their example, or of companions tainted and polluted by their intercourse?

O you, whose cause I plead, and whose fate so warmly interests the numerous friends of Religion and of humanity, whom you see before you, think not that, if I have adverted to the days of which you are now ashamed, I meant to wound you with reproaches, or to add to the bitterness of sorrow, which the recollection of that period of darkness, must ever awaken within you! No; *I speak not this to condemn you*, (that I may use the words of the Apostle, to the once dissolute, but then reclaimed Corinthians) I wish to remind you of the mercies which you have so signally experienced from your GOD, and your REDEEMER! I wish to shew you, and to all who are here assembled in the fear of that GOD, how much you have been raised by the treasures of His grace above those of your sex who abuse the favours of Nature and of Fortune to their own dishonour, and that of the rank and station they hold, but who sinning with impunity in this life, and tasting none of those bitter fruits which you have reaped from the same excesses, partake not in your repentance, as they partake in your guilt; seek no peaceful retreat where, safe from a seducing world, and fled from all that ministered to their debasing passions, they might make some
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atonement for the former scandal of their ways, might deter, by their compunction, as they seduced by their levity, and extinguish their guilt in tears of repentance, and in the blood of their REDEEMER.

And you, who in your different ranks and degrees still maintain that reputation for purity of heart, correctness of conduct, chaste manners, and matron virtues, that have ever distinguished the women of this land; you who rescue your society from the imputation of degeneracy which some melancholy exceptions from this general character might affix to it, let this distinction, conferred upon these reclaimed of the LORD, whom, otherwise, from your sentiments, your feelings, and your habits, you would naturally condemn and shun, favourably dispose your hearts towards them, and conciliate your indulgence and your protection. They have sinned; but they have not been hardened in their sins. They have disgraced your sex; but it is the earnest desire of their souls to wash away this disgrace in retirement and seclusion. Escaped from the waves and the storms of that ocean of vice in which they had been nearly shipwrecked, and where the wretched companions of their shame are still tossed and buffeted, they have fled to this haven, whence the prospect opens to them of returning to the paths of Virtue, and of Peace, from which they had

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been, in an evil hour, seduced!—Never, it is true, never can they regain that innocence that once diffused its sweets o'er these paths, and adorned their spring of life :—That flower once blighted, never can bloom again: But transplanted into a soil prepared and fertilized by the hand of Christian Charity, they will strenuously and unremittingly labour to cultivate in its place the fruits of that repentance, that rises like incense to Heaven, grateful to the purest of all Beings, and conciliating not only His pardon, but His favour and His love.

Thus theirs may be the language of the royal Penitent to his offended, but forgiving GOD:—*It is good for us that we have been afflicted, that we might learn thy statutes.*—The grace of GOD, which performs its wonders by its own ways, wrought upon their hearts by the miseries which their transgressions had entailed upon them. What and how great these miseries were, and what the wretchedness, from which they have been rescued, they best can tell, who, charitably stationed at these doors, to open them to all who knock, hear their sad story from their own mouths, and witness their tears and their anguish while they supplicate permission to terminate their wretched wanderings within these walls, and that they may there find rest for their souls. Cold must be the heart that could harden itself against such wretchedness,
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and unfeeling their bosoms, who could leave to their despair these outcasts of the world!—For whither can they fly?—To the paternal roof? They are excluded from it, as its stain and its dishonour.—To their relatives, and the companions of their early days? They spurn and abhor them as bearing pestilence and contagion in their slightest intercourse. They are abandoned (infamous to tell!) even by their seducers! After basely triumphing over their credulity and their weakness, they are the very first to spurn them, and leave them exposed to the caprice, and brutality of every profligate libertine, with whom they are compelled to carry on their wretched traffic, or to perish from want and nakedness in the streets. Their very cries of repentance, the voice of their anguish, their supplications and entreaties to be allowed to return to the society of the decent, the virtuous, and the industrious, are received with incredulity, are treated with scorn, with mockery, with repulse, and are heard only within these walls, where breathes the spirit of HIM, who suffered the penitent Mary to grasp his feet, and wash them with her tears, and who, knowing that *she loved much*, because *much had been forgiven her*, honoured her in the presence of the fastidious Pharisee, and bade her depart in peace.

How many, through the mercy of the same
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benign REDEEMER, who *bruises not the broken reed*, have so departed hence, we may learn from the same testimony, to which I have already appealed: the testimony of the Managers and active superintendants of this Charity. Some, no doubt, have been found, who, on the removal of the pressure of the sufferings that drove them to these doors, grew impatient of restraint; returned to the *husks and the swine*; delivered themselves up to *still more evil spirits* than those by which they were first possessed, and made *their last state worse than the first*. But although these instances have been greedily seized on to misrepresent this Institution, yet an inspection of the books will prove in the most satisfactory manner, that they are few indeed, in comparison of the numbers who have answered all the benign intentions of the Founders and Supporters of the Charity: and it must needs diffuse delight and comfort into every christian and humane heart, to find by the most authentic record, that out of 3,775 women, the total number admitted since the first institution of the Charity, two thirds have returned into the world so deeply impressed with the sentiments of Religion they had here imbibed, and so confirmed in the virtuous habits they had here acquired, as perseveringly and consistently to maintain the characters of faithful and honest servants, virtuous wives, and industrious and
 exemplary

exemplary mothers of families. Who then, that has, in the least, refined the common sentiments of humanity by the feelings of a Christian, but must anxiously press forward to take a part in a work of such complicated mercy? And should I not injure the cause for which I plead, and damp the feelings on which this Institution rests so much of its hopes of support and permanency, were I longer to detain you from pouring your offerings into the Fund from whence the necessary and indispensable expences of the Charity are supplied?

Proceed, therefore, you who have undertaken to solicit the public bounty on this occasion,— proceed to your charitable work. And you, my brethren, while you individually fix no other measure for your bounty, but your present feelings, and proportion its extent to the good that must arise from it, do not lose sight of the instruction I have endeavoured to engraft on the charitable purposes of this day; but be it your care not only to bring up your own children in the *nurture and admonition of the LORD*, but to labour each in your own station, and in proportion to the means afforded you by PROVIDENCE to preserve to the people of this land, and to diffuse through all their classes, the blessings of a Christian Education.



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