

and honourable, rich and intellectual, may be seen, but the follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. Thus shall he be known and read of all men, a living epistle ministered to the eye of the world as a living and active pattern of Christian excellence.

Humility is another feature of religion which ought always and most manifestly to accompany the reception of temporal blessings; a trait of character, indeed, most difficult of attainment; yet one which will advance the Christian to a near resemblance of the Saviour. "Be ye clothed with humility!" Enveloped in the ample folds of this vestment, the servant of Christ, thus wearing the badge of his Master, stands forth in true and real dignity. Encompassed with a spirit of lowliness, he occupies a far more honourable position than if he stood upon the lofty pedestal of self-esteem, or mere worldly regard. True humility is the proper knowledge of ourselves, the clear perception and recognition of our entire and continual dependence upon God. It is the practical acknowledgment of the glorious sovereignty of Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being, the complete transfusion into our own inward life of that great truth, "God is all and in all." The truly humble heart is

"A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
The great Redeemer's throne."

And the truly humble man seeks not himself, but Christ. With Christ he is crucified; he desires to dwell on Calvary. Is he accepted of God? He is accepted in the Beloved. Can he do the will of God? The Spirit strengthens him in his inner man. His is the lowliness of a loving heart; and thus he seeks, that in all things serving God, God may in all things be glorified by him through Christ Jesus.

For every true believer in Christ, this is the right spirit. Let but the full import of "By grace are ye saved through faith," be perceived and felt, and boasting will indeed be excluded, whether we be rich or poor. But he who receives temporal blessings in a more than common measure is especially called to cherish this feeling, and to guard against all that may be inconsistent with it. His circumstances, operating upon sinful nature, tend to produce self-complacency, and the desire of some form or other of creature-honour; and thus easily may he be seduced to "walk in pride." And in him genuine (not affected) humility will indeed shine, and bring much glory to God. Lowliness of condition, frequent disappointment, the habits of submissive respect called for by the usages of society, may produce a behaviour greatly resembling the walk of humility itself. But when prosperity does not make us overhearing; and when, with large endowments entrusted to us, we say,—

"Father, into thy hands alone
I leave my all restored;
By all, thy property I own,
The steward of the Lord;"

the work of the Spirit is distinguished from human depression, the example is the more impressive by being more distinctly brought out, and the saved rich man greatly glorifies the omnipotence of divine grace.

Temporal blessings ought to be received in a spirit of unbending integrity. The Christian is to "do justice," as well as to "love mercy." His heart is to be so purified and rectified, that every emotion and every aim may flow from right principles, and visibly diverge into clear and untainted acts of uprightiness, forbearance and love; thus evidencing a mind calm and tranquil; elevated above the mutations of earth, undisturbed by circumstances, undisturbed by passions, unchanged by opinions; firm in the simplicity of the Gospel; rigid in the maintenance of truth, impartial in the dispensation of justice, fulfilling duties, occupying offices, permitting temporal honours, receiving acknowledgments, not as the reward of virtue, of talent, of perseverance, or of industry, earned or deserved; but as the result of gifts derived from the Almighty, and given for the establishment of His honour, whose are the gold and the silver, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. The Christian, feeling himself to be only a steward, will endeavour so wisely and faithfully to transact his Lord's business, as that when he is called to give up his accounts, he may do so, not with grief, but with holy confidence and joy.

Temporal blessings too often bring with them the glare, and glitter, and unmeaning tinsel of this world's show, and pride, and parade. They too frequently are abused

and wasted in foolish expenditures, and profitless ceremonies, and empty vanities. From these the Christian must sedulously flee; from these he must pray to be protected. Amid such worldly influences he cannot flourish, if he would grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He must breathe in a purer and holier atmosphere; he must have religion so wrought throughout his whole being as to be placed above the mutations of earth, its maxims, and fashions. As learning Christ, his mind must at all times, and in all situations, be ambitious only for that elevation of quiet dignity, which throws around the character of his great Exemplar a halo of glory, and left a deep and sacred impression wherever he moved.

If those temporal blessings vouchsafed by Providence, exert any power in turning the Christian aside from the simplicity, the meekness, the purity, the humility, and the holiness religion teaches, a woe is pronounced on him. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" fell from the lips of one whose word is unalterably true. With such gifts descend solemn responsibilities; and the improvement and right use of them fix on the recipient peculiar duties, by the performance of which Christian activity, marked humility, and a chastened demeanor, must be evidenced, in order that the world may see that he is one of whom it is said, "None of us liveth to himself."

The mind of the Christian should be perpetually reverting to the peculiar relation in which he stands as only a sojourner here. In proportion as he contemplates the extent, and the riches, and glories of that "better country" to which he can claim heirship, the demands he has on this fleeting, shadowy, and uncertain world will lose their power. The more frequently his thoughts and feelings rise to heaven, the less will he depend on earthly circumstances for happiness; the more keen his hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the less relish will he feel for the tasteless and fruitless ceremonies, maxims, and enjoyments of earth.

Temporal blessings in this land of commerce and speculation, are not only desirable, but, in many cases, necessary, for upholding and discharging the various mercantile duties and responsibilities which crowd upon its inhabitants; and when the Christian, in fulfilling his daily and lawful avocations, sees prosperity crowning his efforts, he must receive all as instruments by which the peace, harmony, and beauty of religion may be diffused; and he must endeavour that in them, and through them, and by them, the Christian character be shown in all the attractiveness of love, purity, and holiness; keeping such temporal benefices in their subordinate place, and acting, and walking, not in his own might, but in the strength and wisdom of God.

Of how secondary a nature are the things of time, when compared with the interests of eternity! Yet it is to be feared that Christians are found manifesting too great a degree of anxiety respecting what endures but for a season; whilst they appear comparatively indifferent to those which have connected with them an eternity of happiness or woe.

If temporal blessings were received and used as the Donor of them intends they should be, how many bright and alluring patterns of Christian perfection would be held up before the world, and how many arguments in favour of the power of religion, in rectifying and refining the character, would be established! For the inconsistencies, the errors, and the imprudencies of Christian professors, when placed in elevated and prospering circumstances, have too often and too truly been pointed at by scoffers and infidels, as undeniable examples of the inefficiency of religion for effecting those moral revolutions it professes to accomplish. How much better, were Christians less anxious for worldly successes and advantages! These, even considered in their most favourable aspect, are but secondary, when placed in contrast with spiritual blessings. How differently do these last affect the mind! Their natural results are deeper humility, more fervent charity, greater forbearance, and an increasing love for communion with the invisible realities of the kingdom of heaven. The mind becomes elevated to a higher state of holiness; what elasticity of spirit there may be, is not that of levity or looseness, but that of a soul conscious of walking in the sunshine of divine favour. There may be loftiness of

feeling; but it is the dignity of Christianity. There may be an unbending men and a firmer step; but these are outward evidences of internal rectitude, and well-understood and settled principle.

Temporal blessings, as benefactions from the hand of Providence, are intended to be framed into beneficial and useful purposes; but the blessings of grace are better and more enduring. The former have more intimate connexion with time; the latter, with eternity. The former may yield fruits of prosperity, and may gain that honour which man can give; but the latter are more truly valuable in producing the fruits of the Spirit. These former may bring the smiles of the world, the welcomes of our fellow-men, the comforts, the emoluments of earth; but the latter are the sources through which flow the favour and blessing of God himself; the friendship of glorified saints, the guardian care of angels. The former leave us as we pass into the darkness of the grave; but the latter conduct us into the brightness of eternity!

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Biblical Literature.

RULES OF INTERPRETATION.

CHAP. III.

Other means to assist in finding the sense of words besides the *usus loquendi*.

Continued.

6. Use of the context in interpretation. Of more limited extent, (a) but rather more evident is the rule to have recourse to the antecedents and consequents of a passage, i. e. the CONTEXT, in order that you may determine its meaning. This is done for two reasons: either that we may choose out of several meanings one which does not disagree with the *usus loquendi*; or that the meaning of an uncommon word, not explained by the *usus loquendi*, may be discovered. Here, however, we must guard against proceeding beyond probability; and to do this, we must observe the same cautions as have been just given above. (Morus, p. 160. ix.)

(a) In the original, *angustius*; by which Ernesti probably meant, of less importance, or confined within narrower limits. But I cannot accede to the propriety of this sentiment; for the immediate context, either preceding, succeeding, or both together, is a rule for judging of the meaning of words, of the very broadest extent. I might say that even the evidence of the *usus loquendi* is, in very many cases, built upon the context. We adopt the opinion that the *usus loquendi* sanctions this or that particular sense, because the context clearly shews that such a meaning is to be assigned to it, and that no other can be given without rendering the sense frigid and inept. Moreover, the general scope of an author does not forbid the admission of a great variety of arguments, illustrations, and episodes (if I may be indulged in the use of such a word here) into the intermediate parts of a discourse; so that one is far more certain of giving a sense that is congruous, by consulting the immediate context, than by merely consulting the general scope of the whole. Both, no doubt, are to be regarded; but of the two, the former is by far the most important means of assistance.

Indeed, I should doubt whether there is any one rule in the whole science of Hermeneutics, so important, and of so much practical and actual use, as the one in question. Great care indeed is necessary, to decide with certainty what sense the context requires that a word should have, especially when the immediate subject is briefly stated. But this care is as easily practised as any other rule is, which Hermeneutics prescribe in different cases. Violence must not be done to words, by forcibly subjecting them to the context, against etymology, analogy, the rules of grammar, or the nature of language. But in every thing short of this, all good lexicographers and commentators adapt the meaning of words to the context, in cases too numerous to need any specification. Comp. Morus ut supra.

7. Various comparisons useful in order to discover the meaning of words. Of similar utility for finding the sense of ambiguous or obscure words is the comparing of subject and attribute; of nouns and adjectives; (a) of words accompanied by other words that qualify them, which may consist of adverbs, or of nouns joined to the word investigated by prepositions, and constituting a kind of adverbial periphrasis; or finally of disjunctives. (b) (Morus, p. 163. xi—xiv.)

(c) *Qualis sint subjecta talis sint attributa*, is the old rule of the schools and of philosophy,

founded upon the common sense of mankind. In accordance with this, we understand as tropical language all those expressions which ascribe hands, feet, eyes, ascent, descent, &c. to God, who is a Spirit. The principle in question is of vast extent in construing the figurative language of the Scriptures; and it also extends to many expressions that are not strictly tropical. Too much certainty, however, should not be ascribed to it; for some cases occur, where the subject is imperfectly known, and of course we are unable to pronounce with confidence what attributes may be ascribed to it.

(b) By disjunctives are meant words placed in antithesis. E. g. *heaven, earth, spirit, flesh, &c.* The rule for finding the sense in such cases is obvious, provided the meaning of either term can be found. For whatever meaning one term has, the other has the opposite; so that if certainly he acquired as to the one, it is of course acquired as to the other, which is to be construed as a real antithesis. Compare P. III. C. ii. § 23.

8. Analogy of languages a means of interpretation. Analogy of languages may also assist in judging of the meaning of words. This is of different kinds. The first is analogy of any particular language, (i. e. the same language with that to be interpreted, which analogy was treated of in a former chapter, and shewn to be useful in ascertaining the *usus loquendi*.) the principles of which are developed by the precepts of grammarians. It is necessary here only to touch upon this analogy. (Morus, p. 163. xv.)

Analogy means similitude. E. g. from the meaning attached to the forms of words, their position, their connexion, &c. in one or rather many cases, we argue to establish a similarity of meaning, where the phenomena are the same, in another. This analogy is the foundation of all the rules of grammar, and of all that is established and intelligible in language.

9. Grammatical analogy useful not only in finding the *usus loquendi*, but applicable to some doubtful cases. E. g. when the kind of meaning generally considered is evident (by comparing other similar words and methods of speaking concerning such things appropriate to the language) we may judge of the special force or power of the word, by aid of grammatical analogy: as 1 Pet. v. 5, where many critics have attached to *egkombosasthai* an emphatic sense, we must compare the other Greek phrases which relate to clothing or investing. And thus we shall see that the prepositions *peri, amphi, en* are used in composition, without any accession of meaning to the verb thereby; and consequently that *egkombosasthai* is no more than *enlusasthai*, with which it is commuted in Clemens Rom. Ep. I. p. 39. A good interpreter should be well versed in such comparisons. (Morus, p. 170. xvi.)

10. Analogy of kindred languages. Another analogy is that of kindred languages; either as descended from one common stock, as Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldean, and Arabic; or derived the one from the other, as Latin and Greek. The former kind of analogy Schultens has explained, and has often had recourse to it, in his *Origines Ling. Heb.*, and in his various Commentaries.

Morus, on this section, says, that dialects differ only in the mode of declining, in the pronunciation and forms of words, &c.; and ranks the Syriac, Chaldean, and Arabic, among the dialects of the Hebrew; while he calls the Latin and Greek cognate languages. General usage however is against him; for cognate languages of the Hebrew is almost the appropriate name of those which he calls dialects.

11. Use of this analogy. This analogy is of use to the interpreter, not only in assisting him, by the aid of one dialect, to restore roots which have perished in another that is the subject of his investigation, and thus opening a way of access to the signification of words; but still more useful as a means of illustrating and confirming that sense of words, which the scope of the discourse commends.

This is a subject deeply interesting to every student of the original languages of the Bible, especially of the Hebrew. Analogy, moderately and judiciously used, is of great worth; but pushed too far, it degenerates into a violation of all the fundamental rules of interpretation. Comp. Morus, p. 176. xix—xxii, where several valuable cautions may be found. Better still may be found in the admirable Preface of Gesenius to his Hebrew Lexicon, Preface to Part I.