No. 14.
On the example of X.
1. Peter, II, 21. - "Leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps."

Where is the observer of life, who has not noticed the paucity of original characters, and the striking marks by which such characters are distinguished? Nature seems to have set her seal of signature upon those who are to invent, create, guide and support: for she has distributed with a sparing hand the qualities of such minds are made. These men are the patterns wh others imitate; these are the centres round wh others resolve. This imitative propensity is confined to no class; it spreads through every department of life, & distinguishes men from each other, as leaders & followers. Few can do more than comprehend what others discuss or remember what others teach. The philosopher, the poet, the orator, look with reverence to the great masters in their several professions, & appeal to their works as the standards of excellence & objects of imitation. And observe the actions of men, either as history or experience, &...
It is not an acknowledged truth that the few who are able to think for themselves have ever been leaders of the many. In the field, the senate, or even in the ordinary employments of life, the love of imitation is a principle, whose influence cannot escape the notice of the most careless eye.

Mankind, then, love to be taught by example rather than by system or precept. Not is it difficult to discover the cause of this wrong disposition. Exempla gratae. Example, more than any thing else, gives to duty an accurate delineation & a definite form. Who does not know how different are the sentiments inspired by the contemplation of abstract virtue of virtuous persons? Dissertations, discussion, precept can but give the skeleton of duty; the uncombined elements of goodness. But when you see virtue exemplified, you see it living, breathing, speaking, acting; you see it in the thousand modifications into which is thrown, by circumstances, by peculiarities of position, temper, talents & habits of thought. You see it under the various hues of shades with which the intercourse of society may tinge it;
you mark its power of influence in the different scenes of life; how it gilds prosperity, consoles adversity; how it regulates passion, calms the feelings of anxiety; you see it, perhaps, struggling with temptation of growing mightier from the conflict, or sinking into weakness by submission or retreat. So is it with a less graphical effect, that example represents the nature of vice. The sight of a drunkard will teach at once more accurately, impressively than the best discourse on temperance, if you would know vice, in the grossness of detail, in its real influence on life, you must mark the course of the vicious and hear of them. But example does more. It tells us that virtue is practicable, that it is something we are not only commanded to attain, but have the power to attain. We are not too apt to indulge a latent scepticism with respect to our ability to perform duty. It is seldom indeed, that we venture openly formally to plead that too much is expected or required of us in the morality of the Gospel. Explain an urge upon us the several parts of God's law, point out its extensive moral force, and we are ready, perhaps, at each step to acknowledge that it is reasonable, just, wise. But, in the meantime, the secret flattery of passion or indolence is fe
in representing this high standard of action as an
all but imaginary 5 in forming us that the at-
tempts to reach it would be useless. Now example
dispeels this illusion; for it shows us virtue en-
bedded in the actual existence of character, drawn out
of substantiation, as it were, in the characters of
beings like ourselves. It teaches us to regard the
perfection of moral excellence, presented in prac-
tical life, not as a picture on the beauty of a
mirror, but away the impression that it is also
nothing but a picture, but as a faithful trans-
script from real life, a history of fact rather
than a sketch of imagination. What man has
can do: the characters of the wise and good,
prove to us that wisdom of goodness are placed
in our reach. 
(Example interests our sympathy more
than a thought of ambition before us.)

This view of the influence of example in genera
at may prepare us to consider the peculiar im-
portance of the example of x. Our Lord is not
like the sacred writer in the text, as the father
of excellence, the bright, glorious original from
which we may copy all that is good and praiseworthy
in character. This precepts of instructions, indeed, is
the purest of the highest code of morality,
that has ever known; this character too is such
8, a glowing form of excellence as the world has
never seen. He who shone as never man shone;
likewise lived as man never lived, acted as
fulfilled as man never did. If then, the imitative pro-
property be, as has been represented, powerful in gen-
eral in its operation, the example of x, if it be allowed
the influence on it, justly claims, must be of mean-
table importance to the end of virtue. 

With respect
to this object, we may consider the character of our
Lord in two points of view: a. It is a holy charac-
ter of x, as it presents a complete skeleton of our
laws of duties.

1. The character of x presents a faultless example.

The particular object of the Peter in this
place was to teach his brethren against the
contempt of suffering, an exemplary
example. We
aren't pride heaped upon the followers of
in their early days of life. To this gen-
rose, he bids them look to the Lord Was for
the also suffered for us, and leaving us an example
of patient men, "the

priest, says of a person,

harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. "The

priest, says of a person, 

harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. "The
in representing this high standard of action as an all but imaginary f customizable us that the attempt to reach it would be useless. Now example dispels this illusion: for it shows us virtue embodied in actual existence of character, drawn not from imagination, but from real life, as a history of fact rather than a sketch of imagination. What man could or man can do; the character of the wise and good. The character of man, in our respect and absolutely innocent. Whether we turn to the memories of his life, or to the charges of his enemies, we find no vice to which he was addicted, no passion lurking in his bosom, no stain upon the purity and brightness of his name. We find nothing like the sensuality of modern life, nothing like that old corruptions to yield to fashionable vices of fashion. The virtues of Plutarch, with the philosophers of antiquity, were not ashamed to avoid. "For such an high priest," says an Athlete, "became us, who is holy harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."
Some imitate, perhaps, only those parts of every good man would lament Sardanapal's, or at best transcribe into our characters the whole mass of our original presents, without distinguishing the pure gold from the base alloy. While Hith is illegitimate these modes of action, we are exposed to a most unhappy self-delusion. We succeed, perhaps, in acquiring manners of certain principles similar to those of him whom we wish to resemble; but, failing to reach his elevated tone of thought or feeling, or to catch the animating spirit which communicates to his character all that makes it an object of reverence or love. - we do at best by the imperfections of blemishes with some of the expressive features of the original. - This in this respect, therefore, that the propensity to imitate may sometimes have a dangerous influence. Now from this danger, in following the example of x, we are perfectly secure; for it exhibit its not a single defect, for us to copy, not a single blemish, for us to transfer to our own lives. There is no vice to ask you may cling with what ever fondness, of which you may imagine has lost its native deformity because you gave it the worth. But here lies our danger. Understand, as it may be blinded by a false estimate, so the resurrection of or of pleasure, - there is no sentiment of reverence toward God, however small or, clad.
ed over. If no feelings of unkindness or indiffer-
ete to man, we can ever find sanction or safety
in the character of Jesus. Neither directly nor
by implication can you make it the pattern of
least deviation from the straight path of duty.

In these views, we propose to follow the steps of the
Scriptures; we are animated in the progress, not
ly by the ordinary excitement of consolations
and solitude, but by the confidence that we cannot
go wrong; by a feeling of safety, which tells us it
shall never be reduced by actions of our own
nature. Under the wings of the Saviour, we
rested on the bosom of God, there is also
sanctuary for any thing which can hurt or

This complete falsehood, my brother, is a hard
pill to swallow, but the importance of not un-
underestimate, because we have grown up in the
habit of considering his character as the em
ishment of moral excellence. We may
not understand its importance by studying
the case had been otherwise. Had the frame
of our religion been addicted to a single view
how many of his followers might have placed
authority for that vice, while perhaps they
his excellencies. Had he been ambitious, very
or voluptuous, would it not have given new

to the spirit of ambition, revenge, & lawlessness
we already dealt sufficiently strong; by appearing
to conceal it? But now no covert propensity
has this refuge. It is not indeed for us to ex-
pect to be innocent, as was innocent; but it is
a powerful guard against every guilty purpose;
if, of course, that no imperfection of ours finds enactment
in him; if that whatever may be our
favorite vice, we cannot look to the example
of it, we may, we have learnt it there.

The character of Jesus, unifying the many aspects
of his nature, presents to our imitation a
complete body of duty. Of this truth, the face can
be felt only by a distinct illustration of the over-
all actions of the Saviour's life. The general excel-
lence of the character no reflecting mind can fail
to venerate & admire; but when we see it in a va
mity of lights & in the midst of the most frequent
of different circumstances, not only do we see the
in a more definite notion of its value, but we
mean with greater ease & security make the appli-
cation to the various conditions of human life. That
because the character which is to obtain only from
the records of his life and the Bible affords us
The more you study these artless narratives, the
more will you see the character of their subject
in unfolding & displaying itself in all the natural
beauties, in all the grace & vigors of real life. If

then you would have a full idea of the work of his followers in the mechanical performance of a periodical duty. He prayed under the fresh influences of those occasions, not upon the heart, but in the act of communion with God. The historians of his life have recorded it of him that he devoutly addressed his Father and, when he was baptized, before he selected his twelve apostles, before the bright glories of his transfiguration, in that solemn eventful night when it was found that one even of those little men to whom were entrusted the golden treasures of heaven, could have traitor of betray his Lord. How venerable, how celestial does the Son of God appear when we see him retiring from the tumult, the applause, in the sensations of the crowds, who thronged around him, to the mountain in the desert, there to pray with all the consecrated feelings of solitude. And let it be observed, this part of the example of presents us with nothing but extravagant efforts or unnatural transport. His devotion consisted not of arbitrary impulses or variable fervours, of superstitions and duties of imagined visions. No, it was the humble profession of an enlightened, understanding the inward utterance of a soul.
purified conscience to the Father of Lightness that form of prayer or be givin is, the dissolution of the Son of God. Not did nor don't think to cultivate in his own breast the sentiments of reverence and devotion: he habitually attended the greater forms of national worship, shrined in conformity to the dispensation of the gracious economy of the law, except where it might interfere with the grand design of his mission. And need I ask you to go with him to the Mount of Olives, not in the midst of the opposing struggle or moving from him drops of blood from his eyes to heaven. If this can not pass from me except I think it, try me, and I will do it! Such my fit is the example of our Lord's purity. Top him now in the exercise of those duties of justice which make up the composition of personal virtue. I observe now how truly his life was a heavenliness of goodness. There is nothing like passion in the sentiments, nothing like fascinating power, to cheat the judgment into admiration; nor is everything great without the show of greatness. The qualities which form the character of a man distinct from that proud I reprove it, is often sheltered under the name of magistracy, and from that sudden a pathu rik is sometimes mistaken for grandeur. That unadorned and visionary zeal and mimics the love of truth, from that affection of purity which is not permanently consecrated by being called holiness. Who will you find more striking in the person of Christ, that virtue without whom no one can be a good citizen or a good man, than in the messengers of heaven, whose youth was spent in seduction of obedience to his parents, whose dying voice, unsheathed by the terrors of the cross, commanded his mother? Is one whom we loved? When his angry disciples would gain have him invoke heaven to overthrow in the offending Samaritans, instead of bowing to the meanness of revenge, immediately shook the vindictive spirit by the assurance that it was his business to save not to destroy. He did not, as a passionate enthusiast would have done, ostentatiously court danger, that boasted of suffering. No, sedately courageous, he avoided danger when he could do it consistently with duty. Finally encountered? It when his hour was come, when his voice is everything great without the show of greatness. The qualities which form the character of a man are necessary. In his indignant exposition and de
There is one point which deserves to be mentioned here. I mean that the difference between the actual character of Jesus that we should expect, had he been a more unassisted man.

There is here a moral phenomenon for which the individual is obliged to reason to account. The character of individuals we know is usually cast in the mould of early impressions. For these impressions being made at a time when the receptivity of excitement is strongest, sensations possess a peculiar accuracy that communicating to the mind, affect their constituting features. By the circumstances of the early life of Jesus, we might suppose a character would have been formed very different from that with the Evangelical describement. 

The poor if they were poor, if lived in obscurity, in humble industry, if they could not give from the learning of his country prejudice. And would it not have made the attempt to sketch even
him to teach and sanctify a religion which, if had been nothing more than
intended for no particular country or class of men, is highly improbable; so it one
men, but for the hearts of all men, be allowed that he was by a peculiarity of human
ages? - Children are known, usually influence, excepted from the force of those
some fiction at least of the prejudicearious associations, or, according to the use
their parents, of those among whom the laws of action, affect the characters and
reactions. It is well known what was the close of life._ The character of x, the ob-
prejudices of the first at the time of decides the bright lessons of virtue, or it leads
These prejudices would doubtless assist its aid in establishing the truth of his
been wrought up to intervene in his pretensions as the approved Son of God.
by his parents; acquaintance; I had been an impostor, it is more than probable he
would have been blended by these
sessions; certainly he were; would have
vanced directly to defeat his own views,
offering the cherished's favorite notice his countryman. Ambition & interest
would have pointed to a different c
When, then for x came forth with a men,
be must either have released his mind
the prejudices, or ceased the impressions of
outlines of this divine picture. I must transcribe the gospels nearest to bring before you the various situations in which appears the humble, devoted messenger of God, the active and meek benefactor, the kind friend, in short, the faith and exemplar of his own instructions. "It is finished," said Jesus when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost; "yes, it was finished not only the mission of mercy and truth, but the mission of mercy. Not only has completed the brightest example of pure and all its elevation of virtue in all its loveliness, on which the eye can rest the long track history.

Thus we have seen how much of the wonderful the example of X teaches us. And now well in mind that it is an example beyond the power of man to imitate; that it is too much to expect others to follow the excellencies of the chosen, the third Son of God. Let me remind you, that complaint proceeds on a mistaken notion of manners in not we are to follow the example of others. It is not so much actions, as the spirit, position, that we are bound to imitate. Action are to be estimated from the occasions out of they spring of from the character, situation, y
motive of the agent. The same explanation be applied to the example of x. It is
not the object of imitation; otherwise we would act as he did, to communicate
not be objects of imitation; otherwise we would act as he did, to communicate
widely away from our example, while the business of the returns upon itself, to correct errors;
In these parts of our moral obligation; for it would
be impossible, and in general, unless we mean
the same distinction, the keener sovails in every
it is we are to imitate, in the divine ex-
ample of x, our religion may be little else than
pragmatism. Your virtue scarcely better than
repulsive.

And this is true, not only of the
may copy. And this is true, not only of the
character, but of the single virtues of a
character, by which they are formed into
models of moral beauty and dignity. This is
it is disposition of piety, benevolence, goodness.
The example of x will not send you
to a state of nature, nor confine you with
mercy, are imitable in any example however
resplendent; but who does not see that
are some acts of piety some expressions
ance; some proofs of generosity, which con-
dence, some proofs of generosity, which con-
sents of universal imitation. The character
sects of universal imitation. The character
only so called, may be the same; but
nature of things the display of it much
frequent in different instances. Now let
He has left behind him that
...shall we refuse its aid? He has left us light of his character; shall we turn away from beams? No, my brother, if you would be wise, surely you are prepared to do good on earth. If in short you would be wise, look to the example of those to use the strong expressions of great minds, there you may "humble your understand eye at the foot and bow beam," there you may judge, unscale your sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance.

...see you may see the high standard of the lives of purify, all great religion demands in the life of him whom it is your glory to follow. The badge of whose service it is good order, distinction to read, there you may trace the living lines of your duty ever fresh and deep. there you may hear him, who has brought us salvation, saying, as he once said to his disciples, "I have given you an example, that ye should do, as I have done to you."
At Mr. Palfrey's in the forenoon, Nov. 22, 1818
At Mrs. Putnam's, Dec. 5, 1818, in the afternoon
At Dedham, Dec. 6th, 1818, in the afternoon
At Salem, Dec. 13th, 1818, in the afternoon
At Dr. Holmes', Sunday, Jan. 14, 1819
At Waltham, Jan. 24th, 1819, in the afternoon
At Hills St., Feb. 21, 1819, in the afternoon
At Mr. Channings', April 14, 1819, in the afternoon
At Medford, Aug. 15th, 1819, in the afternoon
At Mr. Wetherby's, Sept. 26th, 1819, in the afternoon
At York, Feb. 4th, 1820, in the afternoon
At home, Oct. 26th, 1820, in the afternoon
At Mr. Lovell's, Jan. 26th, 1823, in the afternoon