No. 30-7

On Sincerity

Feb. 18, 1821
John 1:46. "Jesus saith unto Nathanael coming to him, son of Jesse, behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

Of the person here introduced to our notice, we know but little; but that little is highly honourable. Isn't it to him? This name is mentioned in only one other place, but the testimony here done to this character by men, "who knew what was in man," is adapted strongly to assist our attention & interest our feelings in his favour. He must have been an ordinary man, of whom we could form no ordinary person. that he was an Israelite; indeed, that in him there was no guile." He is noticed in so brief a manner, that he does as it were, just rise before us & then vanish from our presence; but as he passes of,
we see the good man. My rash he is distinguished.

Will he had some of the feelings of a man about him,
as appears by the first observation of the master. But it
seems, had been called by Jesus, and become accustomed
in some degree with his character, as the Messiah, the hope
of Israel. All as he was probably, of that nation, gay,
when love to spread itself in all kinds of the communicate
his animosity of animation to others, he meets Nathaniel,
by songs to them. We have found him of whom Moses in
the law of prophets did write, yous of Nazareth, the son
of Joseph. This to a few must have been intelligible
of the most interesting kind; but there was one cir-
stance connected with it, that in the mind of Nat-
aniel, astonished or otherwise, credit might have been con-
structed with it, of that was the man where the allies
of Messiah dwelt... Nazareth was the most despised
part of a despised province; its story was sealed by
contemporary historians for the column of a bishop of sepulchre. To suppose that the Messiah should come from this despised
place, was too much for a few to believe. Nathaniel, though,

setting his dark rooted prejudice, by asking, apparently
with something of an enigmatic voice, "can any good
come out of Nazareth?" The answer of Philip was most
miracle a, "come as ye", and Jesus cannot but trim a-
side from the narrative, for a moment, to remark that
this is a fine illustration of what we often see in our day's
course of observation; that biased feelings are exceed-
ingly able to mislead the judgment. Prejudiced ones are
the same in every age. Nathaniel had, like the rest
of his countrymen, received a deep, bitter, prepossession
against Nazareth; probably he had never troubled
himself to inquire into the grounds of it; it was a
common feeling, he shared it with others. So it is with
us. We take up strong prejudices from every quarter; and
of the from no cause at all; by being once fixed, they of-
serve as barriers not only to keep out conviction, but to
exclude the means of conviction from being fairly tried.
All enquiries or investigations are out of the question; the
first impulse is to turn away with contempt, or obey the
impulse. Thus, it is on its own, that a man be loyal only.
of that party, sect, family, or country, against which we have conceived no matter how strong, some innate prejudice. Though that man may have the duty of a point of the wisdom of a sage, we can see none of his merits. Like Nathan are all, 
"can any good come out of Nazareth?" Can any thing fine and lofty be expected of such a man, of such passions, of such a place? Thus every avenue to a just, dispassionate judgment is closed. Why are we resigned to the tyrannical frowns of prejudice? Now to those whose minds are occupied by such unreasonable prepossessions, we can only say in the language of Shelley, "come weep," do not be hasty to judge, before you have candidly and fairly estimated the subject. Examine before you decide; it may be you will find that the passion of whom you are so unwilling to believe any thing good, is not destitute of claims to your regard, or your confidence. Are you disposed to attribute bad motives or a bad character to a man, merely because he belongs to some sect, or party, which you do not like, because he has the misfortune to differ from you in certain religious or other opinions? on this account will you condemn him? Do you suppose him without a principle, and as a momentary 
"come weep," perhaps after all he is as a very good man, a very good man? If at any rate it is incumbent upon you to form your judgment, do not decide in prejudice. It will be well for you, if when so are thus fuddled, excited, bewildered by your passions and feelings, you can still retain fountains of mind enough to "hearken wrought in malice," if like Nathan we are nothing "he come weep," for it seems that he, notwithstanding the contempt of hatred which he felt for every Pharisee, had yet candor enough to obey the injunction of Shelley, "he went weep," he judged for himself. If, on the consequence was, that he became a disciple of that very 
when he at first despised, when he was going to pass by in silent contempt. He appears indeed to have been a man, who in spite of his tenacious prejudices, was possessed of much independence of mind, was willing to listen to evidence, even when he did not believe that any could be produced of such
weight. The question with which I am now engaged is, whether, to show that he knew him to be a person of
some purity and honesty of mind, to be an Israelite indeed, in whom no guile, by a characteristic act coming from such
a source, stamps with honor him, who bears it.

I shall dwell at present on the virtue of sincerity: that trait which God seems to have selected as one of
peculiarly praise in the character of this true Israelite.

This command, because in him there was no guile, because he had a fair and honest mind, free from hypocrisy
and affectation. And this, my lord, is one of the most vigorous and graceful virtues of the true Israelite. The acts of
the hypocrite can never find shelter in the breast of the true disciple of Jesus. In speaking of sincerity now, as it
regards the conduct of men in the intercourse of life, considered as it is in this light, there is no occasion to lament that
there is so little of it in the world. Deceit and hypocrisy, in every rank and condition, from the highest to the lowest,
are so frequent in their acts, that there is an effort to make something do as well as the truth. It substitutes a shallow
false mode of conduct in the place of real feelings and thoughts.

The true expression of these feelings and thoughts. When doubtfully, it is not always prudent to virtues to express
all our opinions, or to lay open the whole of our hearts. There are times when a sense of duty will require us to be silent,
or at least to qualify our expressions, or to moderate our conduct. But this virtue, presence of mind a very different
thing from insincerity. There is a wide difference between not speaking what you believe to be true, and spouting out
what you know is false; between making no professions of

We may be silent in one place, but not in another. If circumstances require it, we may refuse to take any part, but if we do act, let it not
be a false part. There is a very common sort of dishonesty
"in which consists in a vain show of what we are not, a false appearance of virtues and good qualities, when we do
not possess. There are a thousand enticements of craft,
art, by which men play off their deceit, when we another.

Now all these are direct, and incapable of insincerity. But

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of shrewdness, as necessary means of accomplishing certain ends and purposes. And yet, Stillingfleet was described clearly and acknowledged that they are great follies, that it is only for want of true wisdom that men turn aside to make dissimulation a refuge. It is true, the arts of dissimulation may serve a present turn, perhaps successfully enough; but the wise man will look further, regard the future as well as the present. I will find that craft and cunning are useful; but for a short time, while they seem to be serviceable in all occasions, during the whole of life, dissimulation may be at first useful, but afterwards, back on itself recoils, and when we are detected in it, even by those who practice it themselves, we lose their confidence, and the confidence of others is lost, reputation and happiness usually follow rapidly in the train of ruin. The dissimulator always teeters amidst many dangers, and the next step may plunge him into death, from which he may never recover. He has a hard task who always plays a signed part; it always plays a signed part; yet others are not shrewd enough to detect him, he would seem at first, as if by himself. The secret & stratagem to success is all to be sincere; by sincerity we mean that conduct, which consists in simplicity of mind & manners, in sincerity of heart, in a plane & open behavior, free from every thing like dissimulation, deceit & deceitful disguises. It is showing ourselves as we are; it is being what we seem.

Sincerity, besides that it is a true nature, has every recommendation of interest. "Truth & reality," says a judicious writer, "have all the advantages of appearance, many more. If the view of anything be good for any thing, certainly the reality is of it. Does any man resemble y, seem to be that which he is not, but because he thinks it good to have the qualities which he pretends to? If to counterfeit & disguise is to put on the appearance of some real excellence, why the best way in the world for a man to seem to be anything, is really to be what he would seem to be. Besides it is many times as troublesome to maintain the picture of a good quality, as to have the quality; & if a man have it not, it
chance is very great, that he will be discovered to write in it; & then all his pains of labour to seem to have its are lost. There is something unnatural in painting, a skilful eye will easily discern from nature beauty & complexion."

"It is hard to persuade a part I longs for, where truth is not at the foundation, nature with always be endeavoring to return, & will steer itself at one time or another. Therefore if any man thinks it worth his while to seem good, let him be so indeed: if his goodness will appear to every one's satisfaction for truth is convincing, & carries its own light & evidence with it, it will not command us to every man's conscience, but what is of far more importance to God, she searches the heart. This in all accounts, sincerity is true wisdom. Particularly as to the affairs of this world, integrity has many advantages over all the fine & artificial ways of dissimulation & deceit: it is much the plains & easier, much the safer & more secure way of dealing in the world: it has less of trouble & self-

fidelity, if entangled to perplexity, of danger. Hence in it, it is the shortest & nearest way to one end, leading us there in a straight line. The acts of defect & cunning constantly grow weaker, of their efficacy: whereas continually diminishing; while on the other hand, integrity gains strength by use; of the more & longer any man practices it, the greater service it does him by confirming his reputation & encouraging others to oppose their trust & confidence in him. But he who dissembles must constantly be upon his guard, she cautions that he do not contradict his own pretence, for he acts on unnatural part, & therefore must put a continual force & restraint upon himself. He, or the contrary, who acts sincerely, has a very easy task; for he follows nature, & is put to no trouble & care about his words & actions, whereas not to invent any pretences before hand is to make any excuses afterwards for what he has said or done. But insincerity is a very troublesome thing to manage. One at first needs many more to make it good.
of he who is in the habit of resorting to them, built on a false foundation, and continually stands in need of people to shore it up, is more expensive, than to have raised a substantial building at first upon a true and solid foundation. For sincerity is from a substantial thing, there is nothing so clear & unsound about it, being plain & open, it shows no discoveries; but the crafty man is always in danger he walks in the dark: all his pretences are acting parents: if we may reason, that no eye is too dull to see through them: he is the last man that discovers himself to be found out. While he thinks he is making felt of others, he renders himself ridiculous. Sincerity leads us on in a plain beaten road: the travelling is easy & pleasant, it brings a man near to his journey's end; but insincerity carries us round through by paths of narrow passages. It is well if at last it do not bring us into insurmountable difficulties, into unavoidable dangers. If therefore, you have ever thought that carries upon beyond this world, if you regard only your present interest, you will do well to be more frank & open: for these are the principles which in the end mean best, & your brightest, the longer they are used.

The same principles will apply to our opinions on religion & other subjects. In these, it is essentially necessary to be sincere. That man must have a very low standard of rectitude, who can suggest to himself any apology for playing the hypocrite, in his sentiments, with regard to subjects so important, as those of his own soul. Let there be the utmost exercise of sound, mildness, & moderation, but at the same time, let there be firmness, openness, & decision. It is not too common for people to adopt any opinions or religio in which they may suit those with whom they happen to associate. The just in as put off their opinions, as they do their clothes, according to the fashion. Nor this is making a very harmless, insincere, & hollow thing of the most serious affairs. Of all kinds of dissimulation, religious dissimulation is the worst & shows the
commanding character to the practice of the virtue of sincerity. It is stamped with the benediction of divine recommendation; as in scripture it stands pronounced in the lessons of truth and in the requisition of purity of holiness. "Only fear the Lord and serve Him with sincerity of truth," says Joshua to the people of Israel. God teaches us that He takes pleasure in the virtue of sincerity, "I know my God," says He, "that thou trustest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness." The least truth in the guarded heart is. It is to this disposition of mind that the promises of divine favour of blessing are particularly made. "The Lord shall dwell in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" He that walketh uprightly,眼界他所行正直，
comes, nigheth the truth from the heart." "The
man is the man, unto whom the Lord imputeth no sin, in whose spirit there is no guile."
And my faith, if we will but reflect for a moment, we shall hardly think it worth our while to
dismay, when we consider the shortness of uncertainty of life. So it not a poor, wretched employment to fill up this brief span, to play a game of deceit till death comes, if finds no joy with our artifices imitating, to keep us in the dust in the midst of the wind. When that morning shines, it shall make the unison from the dead of the tomb, every man will fall off; all those fine open arrangements of moment, in which we trusted so much in this world, will be the subjects and will have to have been our wise flowers. The time is not far distant for each one of us, when dissimulation will be cut off. Why then, should we assemble now? The hour is now on the wing, when all our arts of hypocrisy shall be exposed before God, angels, men, and when we shall not be vengeful. Why shall we not be honest, sincere, of faithful men, as we shall certainly be, when God shall bring every mouth into judgment, every secret thing, whether it be evil. The mind of God assures us that the hope of the hope of the pure in heart, of the sincere, will rise higher of those brighter in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by J. G. Oct. 1820.
At home, Feb. 18th, 1834 - afternoon

At home, Nov. 6th, 1834 - afternoon